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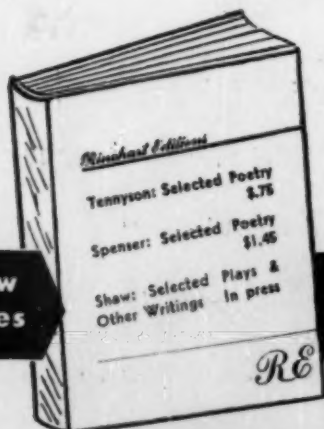
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For Readers

HENRY W. KNEFLER, who reports on the television teaching of English, is an assistant professor of English and the Co-ordinator of ETV at Illinois Institute of Technology. His degrees are from Queen's (Ontario), and he has published in *CE* before. MORSE PECKHAM, OTTO REINERT, and RICHARD FOSTER reappraise Oscar Wilde from widely different backgrounds. PECKHAM, an associate professor at Penn, went to Rochester and Princeton, taught at The Citadel and Rutgers, and has published, *inter alia*, a memorable *PMLA* article on Romanticism. REINERT, an instructor at the University of Washington, has just gone there from Wheaton (Mass.); his Ph.D. is from Yale and his background is Norwegian. FOSTER, a graduate student at Syracuse, comes from Oberlin and Michigan, has taught at Findlay, and has published an article in *UKCR* and poetry in a half-dozen good quarterlies. SHELDON P. ZITNER ("A Short Primer of Educationese") continues the strain established in his "Elegy for a Pedant Noticeably Dead" in last April's *CE*. He is an assistant professor at Hampton with a recent Ph.D. from Duke, and has had several poems printed in the last two years. LAWRENCE J. McCaffrey, who summarizes trends in current Irish writing, did graduate work at Indiana and S. U. Iowa, with his doctor's thesis in the Irish field. He is an associate professor at St. Catherine (Minn.).

BARBARA SEWARD, instructor at Columbia, went to Barnard and UCLA before taking her Ph.D. at the University. She is the author of "Dante's Mystic Rose" in *SP*. STANTON MILLETT and JAMES L. MORTON were teaching associates at Indiana, whose writing laboratory they describe. MILLETT, who has gone to Oberlin as an instructor, graduated from Wabash and wrote his Ph.D. thesis on Kipling. MORTON went to DePauw. HELMUT W. BONHEIM, in the Round Table, was an associate at the University of Washington writing a thesis on Joyce; he has just moved to Columbus, Ohio. His degrees are from Cornell and Columbia. FRANK R. SILBAJOWIS went downtown from Columbia's Russian Institute, where he is a graduate student, to preview the "War and Peace" film, thus following the lead of Milton Stern and "Moby Dick" last May in *CE*—both critics being stimulated by NCTE's roving media-man, Patrick Hazard. SILBAJOWIS, born in Lithuania, also works for the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* and the *American and Slavic East European Review*. AUSTIN C. DORRINS (CEF) is a professor at Howard (Ala.). He took his degrees at Mississippi College and UNC, and has articles accepted by *SP* and *MLJ*. THEODORE POLLOCK, the only poet in this issue, is an assistant professor of Communications at Nassau, with a student's background at Brooklyn, Duke, and Columbia.



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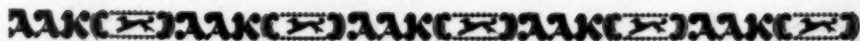
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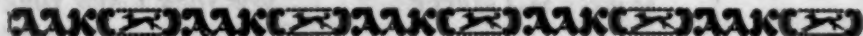
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COLLEGE ENGLISH

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OCTOBER 1956

Number 1

English via Television

HENRY W. KNEPLER

(for the NCTE Committee on College English for Non-Major Students)

THIS REPORT attempts to survey the present and future of teaching English by television. It was prompted as much by concern about the implications of TV as by interest in its possibilities as an educational tool. It will not concern itself with the actual problem of how to present English on TV, but it will attempt to outline present developments in the field, and to project them into the future. And it will try to find a balance between the hopeful and useful side of TV and the possible abuses to which it may be subjected.

No questionnaires were used to compile the report, and only slightly more than thirty interviews were made, either in person or by individual letters to people in key positions to know and evaluate relevant developments. Two-thirds of the respondents are professors of English, many of them department chairmen, and all of them chosen because of their actual or potential involvement in TV. The rest are mostly persons in places of responsibility with educational TV stations, with closed circuit TV operations, and with national organizations mainly in the TV field. The method of collecting information may not seem strikingly scientific, but it has two advantages: the response to the enquiries was nearly one hundred per cent, and the interviews were done "in depth," sometimes necessitating a second and even a third exchange of letters.

AREAS OF TV USE

There are three main areas of the use of television as a teaching medium: television stations, closed circuit systems, and kinescope recordings.

TV STATIONS

A very large number of TV stations, both commercial and educational, have presented "English" in one form or another. So far, relatively little of this has been in the form of courses for credit. For example, several institutions in the Chicago area are engaged in a co-operative series of book reviews over a local station. Series of programs in literature or the humanities, such as the panel program "Conversation Piece" presented by the English department at Nebraska, are frequent across the country.

Organized courses are less frequent. Of them the most famous example is Professor Baxter's Shakespeare, originally presented on a California CBS station. These "telecourses" for academic credit have been presented since 1951, when Western Reserve started its operation. The audience for such telecourses is generally and naturally more akin to the evening-school or correspondence-course public than to the usual undergraduates on campus. Registration in these courses is generally not very large. Western Reserve, for instance, in an introduction to literature

course in 1954 had an enrollment of eleven students for credit and seventy-four not for credit, who paid a small sum for the syllabus only. The listening audience is of course much larger. The following quotation will illustrate the problem. It is taken from *Credit Courses by Television*, a report issued by the American Council on Education of a conference held at Michigan State in 1955, a real mine of information.

Mr. Schwarzwald (Manager of KUHT, University of Houston): We sent out 5,000 questionnaires. One example I'd like to mention was that 510 persons wanted French. We put on a French course and got 50 registrations. Later we learned that about 15,000 persons watched the program. . . . I think we are going to have to realize that the number of people who want telecourses for credit is going to be a small percentage of those interested enough to view the program. . . . (p. 36)

Two conclusions can be drawn: English is holding its own as a popular subject for telecourses; and enrollment in telecourses, in contrast to auditing, has not reached significant figures.

CLOSED CIRCUIT TV

Closed circuit television means TV facilities of limited radius used as a medium of instruction. The viewing audience is therefore not that of a TV station but the campus population. CC-TV can be used as a means to present additional information to students much in the manner of audio-visual aids, as for example at the Naval Academy, where it has proved useful for presenting library research methods. This use of TV is significant in areas of study where close observation of a fairly small object by a large number of students is necessary. Fields other than English seem to have found more uses for it, possibly because a TV screen can make legible only a rather limited number of printed words.

The second use for closed circuit TV

is in the area of teaching courses. The lecturer can be seen and heard not only in the classroom where the lecture takes place, but in any other room where the necessary monitoring equipment has been set up.

Some one hundred institutions in the U. S. now have closed circuit facilities of varying extent, but the majority use them to teach TV itself rather than to give academic courses of other departments. A mimeographed listing of closed circuit facilities at educational institutions as of October 1955 is available from the Joint Council on ETV (see Appendix II).

A conference sponsored by the A.C.E. on closed circuit television was held at S. U. Iowa in February. I will refer to some of its findings.

A number of experiments, largely financed by the Fund for the Advancement of Education, are under way at present. The most extensive ones are being carried out at Penn State (see Appendix II), which is teaching a wide variety of subjects from air science to psychology. The courses are given with inexpensive equipment and production techniques in regular classrooms, and can be seen on TV monitors in other classrooms as well. Penn State is attempting to evaluate the experiments by means of control groups and other tests.

Stephens College is giving a basic course, "Ideas and Living Today," required of all entering students, over TV. A lecturer of national renown is brought to the campus for one semester and gives two weekly talks of twenty minutes each, which come from a studio and are seen in some fifty classrooms and lounges. They are immediately followed up in small discussion groups led by members of the regular faculty.

The experiment at N.Y.U. is of most immediate interest because it concerns the teaching of English, both composition and literature, and because an advisory committee of members of the profession has been at work evaluating the results. Pro-

fessor Oscar Cargill gives this brief description of the experiment:

Our experiment is confined wholly to the first two required courses in English, that is, English composition and the survey of English literature. The students were taken arbitrarily for these courses. We took all the regular day students taking the courses in the normal order, that is . . . taking the first term's work first, etc. We devote two days a week to television lectures. We have divided our usually large sections into small tutorial groups of fifteen to twenty students, fifteen in composition and twenty in literature, for tutorial work in a third meeting which occurs either Thursday or Friday. All shows are live shows. . . . We have a required textbook in both courses.

The experiment, still in progress, uses professional TV equipment and direction, and emanates from a studio.

KINESCOPE RECORDINGS

Kinescope recordings are essentially motion pictures. Instead of the normal filming process they are recorded direct from the TV monitor, but they can be reproduced like films, with a motion picture camera and screen. They can be used on TV stations and on closed circuit TV. Some regular TV programs are "kine'd," and kinescope is one of the main sources of programming for educational stations.

The Educational Television and Radio Center in Ann Arbor, set up by the Ford Foundation, is the main clearing house for kinescopes. One of its kinescopes, an elementary course in German, not given for credit but provided with a syllabus available at a nominal charge, was one of the most successful programs on the Chicago ETV station. Some of the program series under its auspices are telecourses which were originally given for credit by institutions sponsoring their appearance on local TV stations. As far as could be found out, none of these have been given for credit elsewhere so far, but the E.T.R.C. now has set up a policy in this respect because it has received inquiries about their use for credit.

ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

COMPENSATION

The general principle seems to prevail that occasional appearances by faculty should be considered the same as committee duty, etc., and not be paid for. Michigan, which pays a fairly nominal fee for each appearance, seems to be an exception. The majority of institutions, such as Butler and Michigan State, consider the giving of telecourses part of the instructor's regular load, and the usual compensation in this case is two semester hours of regular teaching for one of TV work (i.e., one three-hour telecourse corresponds to two three-hour classroom courses). Houston compensates on a one-for-one basis; Miami University, which began closed circuit operations in February, compensates on a three-for-one basis. But these are exceptions. A number of institutions like Western Reserve and Omaha prefer to treat TV as an overload and compensate accordingly.

COST AND ADMINISTRATION

This report is not the place to enter into the element of costs except for the following general points. No record could be found of a college paying a station like an advertiser for the use of its facilities. Telecourses and non-credit series are usually given on time offered free by the station, therefore almost never in peak viewing hours. To set up a properly equipped station costs a lot—\$250,000 is a conservative estimate; even closed circuit facilities with orthicon equipment, the kind used by practically all regular stations, run easily up to \$100,000—and upkeep is very considerable. With the less expensive vidicon equipment at least \$20,000 is necessary to start with. For their experiments N.Y.U. received grants of \$52,359 and Penn State \$43,845.

Most institutions administer telecourses through home study or extension departments, and the larger institutions have

found it very useful to interpose a TV coordinator between the TV expert and the subject-matter expert. N.Y.U. interposes a materials coordinator between its professional TV setup and the teachers who participate in the experiment. He is a faculty member, who receives one-quarter time off his regular load. Some institutions have broadcasting councils, usually consisting of faculty members.

STANDARDS

The report of the All College Committee on Television Courses for Credit at Michigan State seems to have established the general trends. Among its groundrules are these: the number of telecourses permitted for a degree should be limited; no course should be offered for credit that has not been approved for inclusion in the college catalogue; standards should be the same for TV students as for regular students; students should take supervised examinations. The North Central Association has a Committee on Television which has published a set of recommended criteria for administration, staff, admissions, credit, and academic requirements for telecourses. (See Appendix II.) Generally speaking, standards in telecourses seem to be as high or as low as those of the institutions which give them.

EVALUATION AND OUTLOOK

GENERAL EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING BY TV

Much has been written about ETV, usually in enthusiastic terms. Most of this material is readily accessible, and the annotated reference list (Appendix II) can serve as guide. The numerous statistical evaluations published so far seem to indicate that for the average student TV is comparable in effectiveness to classroom instruction in many if not most respects. Tests have been conducted comparing examination results and retention of lecture materials, and other relevant statistical data have been collected to show that on

the whole TV students can do as well as regular ones. The *Fact Sheet* service of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (see Appendix II) summarizes most of these studies. Professor Kathrine Koller of Rochester states the result in a nutshell: "At present I am inclined to concur with the Report for Pennsylvania State College. Good students do not like it. Poor students do a little better. C students do the same under all circumstances."

On the whole, students do not object to being in the viewing room instead of the classroom, but this does not seem to be the only point. As one of the participants of the Penn State closed circuit experiment put it:

In sitting in as an observer on another television presentation, I was appalled by the lack of discipline and by the general confusion that was in evidence. Students seemed to be doing everything except looking at the screen. (Penn State Report, p. 57)

This was not the reaction of all observers, but the attitude of the instructors and of the observers in the viewing rooms at Penn State was negative more often than positive. The main advantage—and one of greater importance in the sciences, for example, than in English—was felt to be the close-up possible by means of the TV screen. The main objection relevant to our field was that the contact between student and teacher was seriously impeded. To quote another instructor from Penn State:

It was virtually impossible to arouse discussion in this group; questions raised were asked in such timid tones that even I had difficulty in hearing them. This condition lasted out the semester and I was unable to change it although I appealed to students, before "going on the air" several times, to speak up. (Penn State Report, p. 57)

It may be too early to say whether or not this inhibition caused by a two-way communications system—micro-

phones through which students in the viewing rooms can talk back to the teacher—will wear off. In relation to this experiment at S. U. Iowa is of interest, for it attempts to evaluate the possibilities of the use of closed circuit TV in discussion courses. The author of this report, who observed it in operation, feels that the discussion achieved was about as good as in regular classrooms. However, TV discussion classes cannot be multiplied like lecture classes, since the tangle of "feedback" becomes too complicated with more than three small sections, making the experiment prohibitively expensive in terms of equipment and personnel.

A combination of TV and live discussion presents certain advantages, as Professor Cargill's description of the N.Y.U. experiment implies. The use of lectures to large masses of students part of the time may permit the establishment of small discussion groups for the rest of the time. This leads to the question of the use of lecture vs. the use of discussion to which this report turns later.

Of the experiment in English at N.Y.U. no such complete report as from Penn State is available as yet, because it is still in its early stages. Professor Cargill says:

So far we feel that our work in English literature has been very successful, but that our work in composition needs a good deal of reconstruction with the medium especially in mind. The television course has been very exacting on the department. It usually takes twelve or fourteen hours to prepare a good television talk.

Professor Brice Harris of Penn State, a member of the evaluating committee, says:

I feel that their two courses have done surprisingly well in their attempts to present lively and vital information to the students involved. I have seen both courses in action and have admired exceedingly the time and patience and energy which they have expended. I believe firmly that they are getting results.

Another member of the evaluating committee, Professor Koller of Rochester,

raises a different set of points:

1. In general I believe the best teaching is done in the classroom with the teacher in personal relation to the student. This is probably true even with a poor teacher and unquestionably true with a good teacher. . . .

2. The best teaching demands intellectual effort from the student. . . . A TV performance is a performance, and less demanding. . . .

4. The dehumanization of education could be a monstrous thing. . . .

6. The general dislike of the TV classes by the students and the divided opinion of the staff are very significant things and should not be overlooked.

All this refers to closed circuit TV on campus. No comparable studies have been found evaluating the effectiveness of teaching telecourses over regular TV stations beyond the fact that the students who take final examinations generally do as well as regular students.

OTHER FACULTY CONCERNS

We do not live in the ideal world in which the actual effectiveness of our teaching can be our only concern. There are other problems brought up by TV which ought to be considered.

Some of the faculty at Penn State objected to having their classrooms put on public view; anyone seeing their lectures could misconstrue their views on controversial topics; administrators should not see how instructors conduct their classes. There is no answer to this delicate point—only opinion; but it ought to be pointed out that the uses of TV observation in teacher training are extensive and beneficial, and are beginning to be used on the primary school level. New Jersey Teachers College (Montclair) is conducting experiments with grade schools.

Two other points were brought up by respondents to the enquiries for this report: the problem of advancement and the danger of a "star system." As Professor J. N. Hook, Executive Secretary of

NCTE, put it: "A danger is that a few teachers in each literary or linguistic area may become nationally dominant." And he adds that the path to professional advancement may come to lie in the development of TV techniques as much as scholarship. In reply one can quote from the A.C.E. report on credit courses for TV, mentioned above:

MR. LUDWIG (Iowa State College): In our experience, unknown instructors have been promoted to higher ranks due to their work in television.

CHAIRMAN (John C. Adams, President, Hofstra College): Has it become a new criterion for promotion and recognition? I think we have it in the record that this group is of the opinion that a study should be made to recognize work in television as having some parallel to publication as consideration for promotion and advancement. (pp. 42-43)

Those who object to such criteria for promotion will realize that good teaching is a long neglected criterion for advancement, in the view of many who have long chafed at being denied promotion because scholarship is rated higher than good teaching. Some teachers may welcome the advent of TV and see in it an equalizer of opportunity. Professor C. D. Dorrough of Houston writes: "We have hired one professor in English because he had special talents for TV work." But he also writes about a humanities course at Houston: "The department is not too enthusiastic about this type of instruction for credit; hence I feel that they will not voluntarily undertake expanding such offerings."

One fairly frequent comment is the objection to mass instruction and to the mechanization of education. The specter of technological unemployment has risen in the minds of many who have come in contact with educational TV. Anyone who has read the report *Teachers for Tomorrow* by the F.A.E. will realize that the pressure of enrolment will become very great very soon. The report estimates that the college teaching force will have to ex-

pand two to three times as much in the next fifteen years as in the past twenty-five. Without entering into other problems raised thereby, we can see that on the one hand the temptation to use TV will be very great, and that on the other unemployment seems rather unlikely.

The question of the use of kinescopes is another potentially touchy problem. Kinescopes can be used over and over again, and year after year. Professor XY's course in Chaucer can be given on twenty campuses simultaneously, and for many semesters. Some may reply—yes, of course, but sound film has been with us for a quarter of a century, and it has never been used to give courses complete with syllabi and proctored examinations. To this three answers have come up. (1) We have never been faced with the prospect of as great an increase in enrollment, or as long-term an increase, as now. (2) The E.T.R.C. in Ann Arbor has already received enquiries regarding the use of kinescopes for credit courses. According to the aforementioned A.C.E. report on credit courses (pp. 43-44), complete-package telecourses are already available. (3) The *Fact Sheet* (Ser. I, 10 March 1955) service of the N.A.E.B. reports on a study by the Special Devices Center of the Office of Naval Research which seems to show that there is a considerable psychological difference in the receptivity of students for film and for kinescopes. Students learned significantly more from a film, if they were told that it was a kinescope, and less from a kine if it was presented to them as a film.

OUTLOOK ON CAMPUS

... It seems probable that in the field of organized education, beginning at the primary level and carrying through higher education, television will assume an importance second only to the printed page.—*Dartmouth Faculty Committee Report*

Some of the English teachers who wrote to me were very much taken with the possibilities of TV as an educational tool; others were only apprehensive. Most mem-

bers of the profession have likely not faced the prospect as yet.

Nobody has seriously suggested that one professor is ever likely to become *the* teacher of Shakespeare for American campuses or that come Monday at nine A.M. Professor MN will teach the uses of the comma to the nation. But one must consider that a kinescope of a first-class course in contemporary American literature may be better than the course of the local man and that this may not be a bad thing, if one disregards its effect on that man's pride and pocketbook.

The use of TV may free some faculty from tasks it would be well rid of. For example, Professor William L. Phillips of the University of Washington writes:

We plan to offer English 50 [remedial English] next fall. It will be taught by Glenn Leggett, who is the Director of Freshman Composition in our department. It will not offer college credit, but those who successfully pass the course will not be required to take English 50 (non-credit anyway) at the University, should their test scores be low enough to require it. This is simply a way to lighten our *sub-college* teaching obligation; we had 19 sections or 475 students in remedial English last fall.

Another use is reported by Professor Robert W. Rogers of Illinois:

Professor Charles W. Roberts, Chairman of Freshman Rhetoric, and Professor Harris Wilson, his assistant, are now laying plans for a television program to be sent out this summer from the University station. It will be, essentially, a demonstration for the benefit of teachers and parents interested in helping Johnny improve his writing skill. It will not be a credit course, at least in this initial offering. If it works, they may put it on film and release it for other educational television stations. It has not yet been determined whether Professors Roberts and Wilson will be paid for this service.

Some correspondents feel that the use of TV and the increase in enrolments may lead to a division of labor; this may be a relief on the one hand and a widening of

the gulf between levels of faculty on the other. It may be a device to raise standards and enable faculty to pay attention to the exceptional student; or it may lower standards by making mass production easier. In any case, most respondents believe that TV is inevitable, as Professor James E. Miller of Nebraska puts it: "Since I belong to the school which believes that if you can't lick 'em, join 'em, I believe we (English Departments) should lead the way in discovering the *best* way to use TV."

Two views summarize well the pattern of the over-all effect TV may have on education on the campus. Professor Warner G. Rice of Michigan says:

I believe that education is best carried forward by an intimacy, not only between individual teachers and students, but within an academic community where scholars with different capacities and philosophies mingle freely and exchange ideas. I see that this pattern has been pretty well broken up and that it is not likely to be restored, that we are devoting ourselves more and more to social service, that teaching faculties are ringed around with research institutes, that in our larger universities students have precious little opportunity to get acquainted with teachers, and teachers have relatively little chance to move far outside their own specialties. Under these conditions, it is hard to oppose teaching by such devices as moving pictures and television—that is, if students can be lectured effectively in classes of two or three hundred, they may also get the same kind of instruction from a screen. It may even be possible that the use of a screen will allow for some more effective means of teaching in small groups. . . . Whatever the initial intention, television will probably be used to cut costs. Under the circumstances—that is, in view of our present imperfect arrangements—this will be a legitimate move. I need not add that I dislike it.

Professor Edward W. Rosenheim, Jr., of Chicago presents the same idea:

. . . Where teaching has traditionally relied upon the lecture method, the institution has

nothing to lose, and, probably a good deal to gain by television, closed circuit or otherwise; and academic administrators can rejoice in economics and efficiencies. And all save the best lecturers will probably have to realize, like their brethren of the Chautauqua platform and the vaudeville stage, that the species is obsolescent, and that, unless their talents can be adapted to the demands of electronics, they had better seek a living elsewhere.

On the other hand, there are many of us for whom the notion of lecturing is relatively unimportant as a teaching method. . . .

I feel that the teacher who is committed to discussion . . . need not worry for the present about the effect of television on his job. He need not worry, that is, unless administrators fall too deeply in love with television, its drama, economy, and publicity values. Of course, if this should happen, and colleges determine to conduct all or most of their activities over television, teachers will go hungry simply because teaching itself has disappeared.

Professor Rice also considers the matter urgent:

If such changes as I foresee come as rapidly as I think they may, we shall certainly make changes in the training of our young teachers, and offer them different careers from those they are now expecting. I predict that this readjustment will be extremely difficult because of the lack of interest in the new developments on the part of most senior professors. It seems to be possible that the wide use of television techniques will lead to a sharper stratification of teachers than we now have, and that one of the results may be a move toward unionization or organization for self-preservation. . . .

As a comment on this view one can quote from a letter from Professor Fred W. Lorch of Iowa State:

I doubt that we shall engage in TV instruction to the point where departmental policy will be importantly affected. We have had a college television station for nearly ten years. I should like to point out, however, that station WOI at Iowa State College is a

commercial station and receives no financial support from the state legislature. During these ten years our department has participated in many different kinds of programs over WOI-TV, particularly book panels, lecture series on particular topics, and courses. Several members of our staff have had much television experience. I do not believe that members of our staff who have been especially successful in TV work expect salary increases because of their skill, but I can say they are becoming more and more unwilling to put on television programs gratis.

To conclude: TV on campus can be envisaged in four ways:

(1) *To cut costs.* The observations of the writer are that this is highly unlikely, even with less expensive equipment, because of the number of people inevitably involved. It may be possible at very large institutions and, of course, with the use and re-use of film. It is completely predicated on the lecture method.

(2) *To conserve manpower.* This use seems more likely, even though no over-all savings seem possible. It may come about in areas of great scarcity of faculty, and it is also predicated on the lecture method.

(3) *To spread superior instruction.* The experiment at Stephens College seems to indicate that this is possible and may even lead to a beneficial exchange of ideas and teaching methods among the faculty. It is useful in teacher training, as shown at the N.J.S.T.C. in Montclair.

(4) *To enhance courses and teaching methods.* The use of TV as a visual aid for demonstrations and experiments seems to be the most promising use revealed so far.

OUTLOOK OFF CAMPUS

Education by TV off campus, general or continuing or adult education, is viewed with greater favor by respondents. Dr. J. W. Ashton, Vice-President of Indiana, writes:

. . . As far as my own feelings are concerned, I see educational television as primarily significant not in closed circuit oper-

ation for the supplementing of our teaching resources, but rather in the fuller development of adult education programs whereby the institution of higher education is brought into the homes of a great many people who would otherwise have no contact with what higher education means and what is involved in the work which is being done on the college and university campuses. . . . It seems to me that it offers a particularly strong opportunity for the teachers of English to develop continuing interest in literature. English teachers can do a great deal to help fill the emotional and intellectual near vacuum which is a danger as leisure time grows and many people have difficulty in finding adequate uses for that leisure time.

Here, too, a word of caution is needed in the view of some of the respondents. It is best exemplified by a reference to the plans of some of the community ETV stations in large cities to create cooperative colleges of the air. Dr. John W. Taylor, a former teacher and university president, and now the Executive Director of the Chicago ETV station WTTW, writing in the *Illinois Educator* (Jan.), has this to say of college-level courses:

College-level courses. The president of the largest engineering school in the country has stated that 75 percent of the first two years of an engineering course can be taught by television. If this is true, close to 100 percent of the general education of the first two years of a liberal arts course may be taught by television. To make this effective, of course, is not as simple as it sounds. On the other hand, a group is studying this very problem with a view toward seeing whether, by the fall of 1956, the colleges and universities of greater Chicago area could not offer the first two years of general education at the college level by television over Channel 11. (pp. 192-193)

Dr. Taylor's view may be over-optimistic as to timing, but not as to principle. Just as administrators will have to be aware of increased pressure for easier exchange credits and residence requirements, so teachers will have to be aware of the possi-

bilities of their increased involvement in community service.

CONCLUSION

Two personal opinions on the use of television for education will conclude this report. The first one concerns TV on campus and is once more from Professor Lorch, whose institution has the oldest TV station associated with a college:

. . . (1) Television instruction is not as effective as personal instruction. (2) Instruction by television may become necessary in the face of impressive enrollments to satisfy the hope that more people may be taught without staff increases. (3) Television instruction will not be much cheaper than personal instruction, perhaps no cheaper at all. (4) Unless we at Iowa State College are absolutely forced by circumstances to teach more students with our present staff, we do not consider television instruction a solution to our problem. (5) A savings can be effected by television instruction only when programs are filmed and the films used for several later courses.

The other one is once more from Professor Rosenheim of Chicago, who, besides teaching humanities, produces the Chicago contribution to NBC radio and to the TV station WTTW:

. . . Television programs can provide a unifying and even inspiring center for extension activities which will carry the activities of a university far beyond the limits of the campus. Great teachers can provide background and motivation and, even a certain amount of substantive information through lectures on television; I can visualize this being presented in conjunction with a program of neighborhood discussions, of rigorous study, of preparation of assignments, and an examination. In effect, television can enrich and broaden the influence of the university, but it cannot be confused with the kind of teaching which elicits active, disciplined inquiry—the most important form of learning.

If I may be permitted a final word, it is simply to remind the reader that television, like the printed page, is not an intellectual

discipline; it is only a medium of education. It is definitely more than the sum of its parts, radio and motion pictures. It can lead to a mechanical mass college. It

can become a considerable educational force.

It is up to us to take a hand in shaping it.

APPENDIX I

Telecourses of English in U. S. Colleges and Universities

(Compiled by Dr. Lawrence E. McKune, TV Producer-Coordinator,
Michigan State)

INSTITUTION	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT
Assumption College (Mass.)	English #301	1
Baltimore Junior College	Practical English	1
University of Bridgeport	Living with Literature	2
	20th-Century Literature	2
Butler University	World Literature	3
	Short Story	3
	Shakespeare	3
California S.T. College (Pa.)	English 1-2	4
	English 3-4	4
Central Michigan College	Solving The Speech & Reading Problems of Children	1
East Carolina College (N.C.)	Shakespeare	3
Houston, University of	English 131, 231, 231R, 232	each 3
Indiana S.T. College (Pa.)	English 1-2	4
	English 3-4	4
Indiana University	English N 101 T	2
	Introd. to Linguistics	2
	Language for Writing	2
Iowa State College	American Literature	3
Kansas City, University of	You and Shakespeare	1
Marywood College (Pa.)	History of Drama	2
Michigan State University	Speech TV 464	3
	Literature & Fine Arts	3
Mills College	Shakespeare on TV	1
North Carolina State College	Literature	2
Omaha, University of	Shakespearean Play	1
	Speech 111 TV	1
	Speech 401 TV	1
	Speech 441 TV	2
Southern Oregon College of Education	English 107, 108, 109	each 3
San Diego State College	English	1
	Speech Arts	1
Slippery Rock S.T. College (Pa.)	English 1-2	4
	English 3-4	4
Southern California, University of	Shakespeare	1
Southern Methodist University	Speech & Theatre 719	1
Washington, University of	English N45	3
	Drama 427	2
Western Reserve University	Comparative Literature	2
	Speech 308, 311	each 2
	English 251	2
	The English Bible	3
	20th-Century European Drama	3

APPENDIX II

References and Addresses

- American Council on Education (Committee on Television), 1785 Mass. Ave., N.W., Wash. 6, D. C. *Credit Courses by Television* (\$1). Report of conference at Michigan State, Feb. 1955. A very important document for insight in the whole field. *Teaching by Closed-Circuit Television* (\$1). Report of conference at S.U. Iowa, Feb. 1956.
- American Psychologist*, Prince and Lemon Streets, Lancaster, Pa. (Oct. 1955, 30¢), a special issue devoted entirely to TV, with good summaries of most aspects.
- Educational Television and Radio Center, 1610 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The clearing house for ETV. Bi-monthly bulletin free on request.
- Fund for the Advancement of Learning, 1785 Mass. Ave., N.W., Wash. 6, D. C. *Closed Circuit Television Installations at Educational Institutions* (Mimeographed report, Feb. 1956). Center for organizations concerned with ETV.
- Michigan State, East Lansing, Mich. *Report of the All College Committee on Television Courses for Credit* (Mimeographed). The Continuing Education Service has collected much material on telecourses.
- National Association of Educational Broadcasters, 14 Gregory Hall, University of Illinois, Urbana. *Fact Sheet* (\$2.50 per annum), which digests information on ETV, and other publications.
- North Central Association (Committee on Television), "Telecourses for Credit," *NCA Quarterly* (Oct. 1954).
- Penn State, University Park, Pa. *An Investigation of Closed Circuit Television for Teaching University Courses* (July 1955). A full statement of the Penn State experiment, with the best recent bibliography of ETV.
- Taylor, John W. "The Potential of Educational Television," *Illinois Educator*, (Jan. 1956). A statement of the services ETV stations can render to formal education.

A limited number of reprints of this article are available from NCTE headquarters at twenty cents each.

What Did Lady Windermere Learn?

MORSE PECKHAM

ALTHOUGH on first reading, the plot of *Lady Windermere's Fan* seems to consist entirely of the melodramatic clichés of the well-made play, in *Understanding Drama* Professors Brooks and Heilman have given Wilde's comedy a close and sympathetic analysis. To them it is a play about Lady Windermere's education: "And what has she learned? Not merely that Mrs. Erlynne is a good woman. But the more general truth that good and evil are not easily determined by simple rules, that they do not often exist in pure form, so to speak; hence one must measure the evidence carefully and must avoid hasty conclusions."

Yet it is odd that Wilde thought so

highly of his plays if this is all *Lady Windermere's Fan* amounts to—a few witty epigrams, a trite plot, and a dull moral. True, Wilde was capable of self-deception, but perhaps his talent was more subtle than these days we are inclined to believe. And so I am going to assume that his first comedy is worth looking at again.

The plot consists of three simple situations, all so worn out that it hard to believe that anyone, let alone Wilde, would use them. The primary situation, the Long-Lost Child pattern, is one of the oldest in the world. But Wilde does several curious things with it. First, it is the parent who is lost, not the child. This in itself would not be very significant were it not for

something else. The usual emotional release of this plot is the recognition scene, or else the acquisition of a substitute parent or child. But Wilde neither permits a recognition nor supplies a parent.

It is not enough to say that a recognition scene would be incurably melodramatic. So common is the plot that any audience must anticipate the recognition, and when it does not occur must wonder why not. The whole fourth act builds towards it, but it does not happen. Mrs. Erlynne is on the verge of telling the truth, but she keeps her secret. Furthermore she is rewarded for her silence; she gets Lord Augustus. Why is she rewarded? Mere Wildean cynicism? I think that the crux of the matter lies in finding out why Mrs. Erlynne is silent.

The second simple plot-pattern is the Meeting of the Rival Women. Exhausted as this device is, in a serious situation it can be effective if carefully handled, whether the rivalry is social or sexual, or both. The last part of Act I and the first third of Act II build toward the encounter of Lady Windermere and Mrs. Erlynne. When they meet, what happens? Lady Windermere "bows coldly to Mrs. Erlynne, who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room." Again we have the non-fulfillment of a traditional plot-device. The audience anticipates what is going to happen, but it is disappointed. There is, however, a meeting in Act III. I have pointed out that the encounter theme can depend on either a social rivalry or a sexual rivalry. Wilde completely disposes of the social rivalry, while by dramatic irony—by the end of Act II the audience knows that Mrs. Erlynne is Lady Windermere's mother—he completely disappoints the audience's anticipation of an encounter based on sexual rivalry.

The third antiquated trick is the Discovery Scene. Like Sheridan, Wilde conceals two people, but he lets the important one escape; Lady Windermere would lose more by discovery than Mrs. Erlynne. The latter might lose Lord Augustus, but she

at least can take care of herself. Her daughter cannot. So the scene really revolves around whether Lady Windermere is to be caught, as the discovery of the fan makes very clear. Lord Windermere is heading straight towards his wife's place of concealment when Mrs. Erlynne appears, gets everyone's attention, and lets her daughter escape. And again we have the non-fulfillment of a traditional stage-device.

The play, then, is built upon the frustration or non-fulfillment of three of the most ancient and common theatrical plot-devices imaginable. Wilde has put it together by *not* completing traditional patterns. The disappointment of the encounter between the social rivals leads to Lady Windermere's flight. Her arrival at Lord Darlington's rooms leads to a false encounter between sexual rivals. And that in turn leads to the disappointment of the discovery pattern, which by changing Lady Windermere's attitude towards Mrs. Erlynne, in Act IV leads us to the major theme of the play, the disappointment of the lost-child pattern in the non-fulfillment of the expected dénouement of recognition between child and parent. If we look at the play from his point of view, we are led straight to the question I have already asked. Put in another way, it is, "Why is Lady Windermere not allowed to learn the truth?" It appears to me that Wilde has unmistakably and most ingeniously forced our attention to that point. And if this is so, it is a mistake to say that there is really nothing left to happen in Act IV, as do Brooks and Heilman. Everything happens in Act IV.

Now it would appear that if Lady Windermere has really learned her lesson, she may be considered able to learn the truth. She says she has learned her lesson, and Professors Brooks and Heilman believe her. She has been through terrible experiences: convinced her husband is false to her; forced to receive a scarlet woman in the last pure home in London; driven to flight, abandoning her child; humbled be-

fore a detested woman, whom she has been forced to learn to respect. She has been forced to learn that she is capable of wrong judgments and that people are a mixture of good and bad. But she has not questioned the *standards* by which she judges. She discovers that she is capable of evil; but she knows that she is good. She has discovered that Mrs. Erlynne is capable of good; and she concludes that Mrs. Erlynne is not bad. She has understood nothing about Mrs. Erlynne. On hearsay she decided that Mrs. Erlynne is bad; on gossip she refused to trust her husband, whom she professes to love; because of a social embarrassment she abandoned home, husband, and child—for a lover. She thought Mrs. Erlynne a devil; she concludes that she is an angel. She learns to question her conclusions, not her categories.

Her final scene with Mrs. Erlynne is the crucial scene of the play.

Mrs. E. You are devoted to your mother's memory, Lady Windermere, your husband tells me.

Lady W. We all have ideals in life. At least we all should have. Mine is my mother.

Mrs. E. Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better.

Lady W. If I lost my ideals, I should lose everything.

Mrs. E. Everything?

Lady W. Yes.

And that is the end of the matter. Lady Windermere is not permitted to learn the truth because she hasn't earned the right to the truth. Her ideals are still the same. She is condemned to live in a world of illusions. She has learned nothing. Freedom is not for her. She has neither the brains nor the courage. And so Mrs. Erlynne forbears. Who is the good woman of the sub-title? If it is Lady Windermere, she is good only because she is stupid and shallow. The truly good woman is Mrs. Erlynne; but not because she rescues her daughter. Any mother would do that under the circumstances. She is good because

she has brains enough to realize that some people must be forever separated from realities. She is good not because she saves her daughter from making her own mistakes but rather because she spares her daughter from facing the realities which would destroy her. The final exchange between Lady Windermere and her husband shows how very little she has learned.

Lady W. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

Lord W. Darling, why do you say that?

Lady W. Because I who had shut my eyes to life, came to the brink. And one who had separated us—

Lord W. We were never separated.

Lady W. We never must be again. Oh, Arthur, don't love me less, and I will trust you more. I will trust you absolutely. Let us go to Selby. In the Rose Garden at Selby, the roses are white and red.

The irony of Lady Windermere's final sentence is one of the best things in the play. In the world of innocence, things are clear and simple. If the innocent discover evil in what they thought was good, they can remain innocent, nevertheless. But only by questioning and revising their categories can they become experienced. And to revise one's categories takes intelligence and courage.

Lady Windermere, then, is not allowed to learn the truth because she is one of those who cannot tell the difference between ideals and illusions, not an uncommon type, and she is therefore incapable of true moral growth. Through his ironic and subtle analysis of a particular kind of personality Wilde attacks the inadequacy of the traditional categories of good and evil. Lady Windermere began as an absolutist and remains an absolutist. Wilde's attack is directed against absolute morality, not against the absolutist's inadequate realization of his own moral absolutes. Arnold had identified the source

of this rigidity, the Evangelical conscience, in which Lady Windermere was trained, and had demanded that the middle-class transform itself. Wilde showed how improbable it was that Arnold's desires should be fulfilled. For in fostering absolute morality, the Philistine trained his

children in rigid moral ideals, and so condemned them to a life of illusions, a life forever separated from reality. "Realities are better," says Mrs. Erlynne. "They wound, but they are better." "In the Rose Garden at Selby," her daughter replies, "the roses are white and red."

Satiric Strategy in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

OTTO REINERT

ALMOST everyone agrees that *The Importance of Being Earnest* is good fun, but few have tried to show that it is also a good play. To say that Wilde has written a brilliant farce is not to say why it seems both funnier and more significant than other superior farces, and to say that the farce satirizes Victorianism is not, at this late date, to tell us why it amuses at all. From some of the incidental comments one gets the impression that the play is untouchable, so exquisite that criticism would be fatal—stupid abuse of something bright and fragile. A few critics, who take their business more seriously, refuse even to be charmed. The play "never transcends . . . the incomplete or the trivial," Edouard Roditi writes in his generally perceptive book on Wilde (1947). "Its tone is that of satire, but of a satire which, for lack of a moral point of view, has lost its sting and degenerated into the almost approving banter of a P. G. Wodehouse."

But only a curious form of critical blindness can dismiss *Earnest* as a trifle of dialogues. It merits attention both as satire and as drama. The farce is meaningful. Tone and plot have been successfully integrated, and the whole is more truly comic—because normative—than a well-made play to end all well-made plays, a vehicle for the utterance of witty non-

sense. Awareness of its satirical strategy precludes the criticism that it is elusive of reasoned analysis for lack of any kind of rationale.

Wilde first employed a pattern of ironic inversion in *An Ideal Husband*, the play immediately preceding *Earnest*. Its hero, Lord Goring, is not the irresponsible dandy he seems to be, the surface frivolity is not the real man, and his flippant paradoxes emphasize the irony of his moral position relative to that of Lord Chiltern, the pretended pillar of society. For the first time in his plays Wilde puts the fine art of epigram to serious purposes: it participates in the total meaning of the play.

Lord Goring's wit expresses that ironic attitude to life that guarantees moral salvation in Wilde's world. But though the brand of wit is similar in *Earnest*, such an attitude cannot be attributed to any one or several of the characters in the later play, simply because it has no hero (or heroine) in the sense in which Lord Goring is the hero of *An Ideal Husband*. The characters in *Earnest* never stop being flippant; their flippancy is their whole nature and not, like Lord Goring's, the mocking mask of enlightened irony in a pompous society. The only ironist in *Earnest* is Wilde himself, who not only has abandoned the simple ethics of thesis melodrama but also

has deliberately sacrificed the illusionistic conventions of naturalism in order to gain what Francis Fergusson calls (in *The Idea of a Theater*, 1949) a "limited perspective, shared with the audience, as the basis of the fun," showing "human life as comic . . . because . . . consistent according to some narrowly defined, and hence unreal, basis."

That is why there is no reason to be embarrassed by the farce label. The play's merit is that it is *all* farce, capable of serving as a lucid image of the non-farcical reality that is kept strictly outside the play. Wilde has respected his paradoxes. He is no longer putting them to menial service as bright spots in sentimental thesis plays or as devices of crude melodramatic irony. *The Importance of Being Earnest* is one sustained metaphor, and esthetic detachment is the only mood in which it can be intelligently enjoyed. It insists on being acted straight, for if we should feel, even for a moment, that the characters are aware of what absurdities they are saying, the whole thing vanishes. Once object and image are confused there is a blurring of vision. No one in his right mind gets emotionally involved with the destinies of Algernon and Cecily, Gwendolen and Jack. But it is precisely their emotive neutrality as figures of farce that allows Wilde's characters to establish his "limited perspective": Wilde's basic formula for satire is their assumption of a code of behavior that represents the reality that Victorian convention pretends to ignore.

Algernon is explaining his reluctance to attend Lady Bracknell's dinner party: "She will place me next Mary Farguhar, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner table. That is not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent . . . and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public." To say that Algernon's tone here is consciously flippant is to miss the joke

altogether. The quip is not a quip; it means what it says. Algernon is indignant with a woman who spoils the fun of extra-marital flirtation and who parades her virtue. He is shocked at convention. And his tone implies that he is elevating break of convention into a moral norm. He is not the first figure in English satire to do so; among his ancestors are Martin Scribner, other assumed identities in Pope and Swift (including Gulliver), and the apologist for Jonathan Wild. What they all have in common is that they derive their ideals for conduct from the actual practice of their societies, their standards are the standards of common corruption, they are literal-minded victims of their environments, realists with a vengeance.

Here is Algernon on conventional love institutions: "I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over." And here is his vision of the post honeymoon tea table:

Algernon: Have some bread and butter. The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

Jack: And very good bread and butter it is too.

Algernon: Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already. . . .

The girls, too, implicitly accept this inverted code. In the proposal scene between Jack and Gwendolen the latter acts out reality: girls about to be proposed to quite realize the situation and are annoyed by their suitors' conventionally bungling approach. In the second act Gwendolen explains to Cecily that she always travels with her diary in order to "have something sensational to read in the train." One of Cecily's first speeches expresses her concern for "dear Uncle Jack" who is so "very serious" that "I think he cannot be quite well." When Algernon, at their

first meeting, begs her not to think him wicked, she sternly replies: "If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy." Paradoxical morality cannot be argued much further than this, and the speech upsets even Algernon. In context it cuts down to the very core of the problem of manners with which Wilde is concerned. It epitomizes the central irony of the play, for the Bunburying Algernon, in escaping the hypocrisy of convention, becomes a hypocrite himself by pretending to be somebody he is not. (Even Miss Prism participates. She is telling Cecily about her youthful novel: "The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.")

Only Jack and Lady Bracknell seem at first glance to be outside the pattern of inversion, expressing shock when confronted with the code of cynical realism. But their conventionality is not genuine. Jack is a confirmed Bunburyist long before Algernon explains the term to him, and Bunburyism is most simply defined as a means of escape from convention. He occasionally acts the role of naive elicitor of Algernon's discourses on Bunburyism and is not such a consistent theorist of the realist code, but his behavior is certainly not conventional.

One of Lady Bracknell's main plot functions is to be an obstacle to Jack's romance with Gwendolen, but a systematic analysis of her speeches will show, I think, that she has no illusions about the reality her professed convention is supposed to conceal: "... I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind." To her the speech is neither cynical nor funny. It represents that compromise between practical hardheadedness and conventional morality that she has worked out to her own satisfaction and behind which she has retired in dignified immunity. In

other speeches she advocates Algernon's code with as much sanctimoniousness as he: "Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid." She moralizes on behalf of people who take it for granted that illness in others is always faked and that consequently sympathy with invalids is faked also, a concession to an artificial and—literally—morbid code. The frivolous banter accomplishes something serious. It exposes the polite cynicism that negates all values save personal convenience and salon decorum. Life and death have become matters of *savoir-vivre*.

The following speech presents a somewhat more complex case, because Lady Bracknell is here simultaneously deferring to convention and exposing its sham: "French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so." To laugh at presumably improper songs is to fly in the face of convention and break the delicate fabric of social decorum. But the opposite reaction is hardly less reprehensible. To register shock at indecency is indecently to call attention to something people realize the existence of but refuse to recognize. In her last sentence she quietly gives away the polite fiction that people in society know foreign languages.

When the pattern of inversion operates the characters either express or assume a morality that is deduced from the actual behavior of high society, though the existence of conventional morality is sometimes recognized as a fact to come to terms with. What the accumulation of paradox adds up to is an exposure both of hypocrisy and of the unnatural convention that necessitates hypocrisy. In elegant accents of pompous bigotry Wilde's puppets turn

moral values upside down. "Good heavens," Algernon exclaims when Lane tells him that married households rarely serve first-rate champagne. "Is marriage so demoralizing as that?" We are made to share Wilde's view of the ludicrous and sinister realities behind the fashionable façade of an over-civilized society where nothing serious is considered serious and nothing trivial trivial.

But *Earnest* is, before anything else, a play, an imitation of *action*, and no discussion of tone apart from its dramatic setting can account for the extraordinary impact of the play as play. It is rather odd, therefore, to notice that even critics who have been aware of serious satiric implications in the dialogue have been prone to dismiss the plot as negligible, as, at best, "inspired nonsense." "The plot," writes Eric Bentley, in *The Playwright as Thinker* (1946), "is one of those Gilbertian absurdities of lost infants and recovered brothers which can only be thought of to be laughed at," and he defines the function of "the ridiculous action" as constantly preventing the play from "breaking into bitter criticism." There is truth in that, but the action has another and far more important function as well: it informs the satiric dialogue with coherent meaning.

The action of *The Importance of Being Earnest* is about just that—the importance of being earnest. The title is as straightforward a statement of theme as any literalist could ask for. Specifically, the play deals with the consequences of that way of not being earnest that Algernon calls Bunburying, and it is Bunburying that gives the plot moral significance. The key speech in the play is Algernon's little lecture to Jack: "Well, one must be serious about something, if one wants to have any amusement in life. I happen to be serious about Bunburying. What on earth you are serious about I haven't got the remotest idea. About everything, I should fancy. You have an absolutely trivial nature." Bunburying

means to invent a fictitious character, who can serve as a pretext for escaping a frustrating social routine, regulated by a repressive convention. The pretended reason for getting away is perfectly respectable, even commendable, according to convention: to comfort a dying friend, to rescue a fallen brother. Thus defined, Bunburying is simply the mechanism that sets in motion the preposterously elaborate plot of mistaken identities. But the word has also a wider meaning. Significantly, Algernon *happens* to be serious about Bunburying—that is, it is not the subterfuge itself that is important, but the commitment to a course of action that will provide fun. The Bunburyist in the wider sense is serious about not being serious, and Bunburyism is the alternative to a convention that fails to reckon with the facts of human nature. It stands for behavior that will give experience the shading and perspective that convention denies it. To be serious about everything is to be serious about nothing; that is, to trifle. Algernon charges Jack (unfairly, as it happens) with a failure to discriminate among life values, to see that monotone of attitude blunts the spirit and deadens joy. And this is precisely Wilde's charge against Victorianism.

The Bunburyist lives in a world of irresponsibility, freed from the enslavement of a hypocritical convention. He enjoys himself. But life beyond hypocrisy is life in a dangerous climate of moral anarchy, and, like most states of revolt, Bunburyism is not ideal. The escape from convention is itself a flagrant instance of hypocrisy: pretense is the price the Bunburyist pays for freedom from the pretense of convention. In his title pun Wilde catches the moral failure of dandyism. Just as the conformist pretends to be, but is not, earnest, so Algernon and Jack pretend to be, but are not, Ernest.

What Wilde is saying, then, is that all normal Victorians who want to retain the respect of their conventional society are, perforce, Bunburyists, leading double

lives, one respectable, one frivolous, neither earnest. Bunburyism, as Algernon confesses in the opening of the play, is the application of science to life, to the exclusion of sentiment. Sentiment properly belongs to art. The science is the science of having a good time. These are obviously false distinctions, and all that can be said for Bunburyism as a way of life is that it offers relief from a social round where, in Lady Bracknell's words, good behavior and well being "rarely go together," and where, according to Jack, "a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness." Bunburyism marks one of the extreme points in the swing of the pendulum, Victorianism the other.

Neither of the two Bunburyists is either earnest or Ernest—before the very end.¹ It is only then that they become, and in more than a single sense, themselves. When the action begins they have already

¹ It is the one flaw in a superbly constructed play that Algernon remains Algernon at the end and thus ineligible as a husband for Cecily. To say that she does not seem to mind at that point or that Dr. Chasuble is quite ready for the christening cannot conceal the flaw. It staggers the imagination to try to think of any way in which Wilde could have turned Algernon into a second Ernest, but, given the plot, he ought to have done so.

escaped the mortifying seriousness of convention, but it takes them three acts and the movement from town to country—the movement has symbolic relevance as a return to "naturalness"—to regain their balance and become earnest, that is, neither conventionally nor frivolously hypocritical. At the end of the play the respectable (though amorous) Miss Prism (her name suggests "prim prison") has been unmasked, the four young people are romantically engaged, Jack has discovered his Bunburying identity to be his true self, and Lady Bracknell must recognize the contemptible orphan of Act I, "born, or at any rate, bred in a handbag," as her own sister's son. The plot, as it were, makes a fool of respectability and proves the two Bunburyists "right" in their escapade. But it also repudiates Bunburyism. Algernon, who as a Bunburyist spoke cynically about proposals and matrimony in Act I, is happily proposing marriage to Cecily in Act II, and at the end his initial false dichotomies between life and art, science and sentiment, have been resolved in romance. The radical remedy of Bunburying has effected a cure, the pendulum rests in the perpendicular, and we share Jack's final conviction of "the vital Importance of Being Earnest." The two adjectives have not been chosen lightly.

Wilde as Parodist: A Second Look at *The Importance of Being Earnest*

RICHARD FOSTER

The Importance of Being Earnest is apt to be a stumbling block both to the detractors and admirers of Oscar Wilde as a man of letters. Those who want to dismiss him as the greatest ass of aestheticism may be troubled to find themselves, in this play, laughing with rather than at

Wilde. Those few, on the other hand, who see in the whole of Wilde's work the same revolutionary quest for new means and materials of literary expression which characterized the poetic innovators of nineteenth-century France sometimes find it hard to laugh at all. Meanwhile, the play

continues to flourish as one of the world's most robust stage classics. Part of the critics' difficulty—an inadequacy frequently experienced by critics, never by audiences—is that they cannot accurately name its type. The terms "farce" and "comedy of manners," the labels most frequently applied to *Earnest*, are neither of them adequate designations of the especially subtle and complicated artistic "being" that the play has.

Farce, first of all, depends for its effects upon extremely simplified characters tangling themselves up in incongruous situations, and upon a knowing audience gleefully anticipating their falling victim, in their ignorance, to some enormous but harmless confusion of fact or identity. We think of *The Comedy of Errors*, of *She Stoops to Conquer*, of Uncle Toby about to show "the very place" to the breathless Widow Wadman. Wilde's characters are certainly uncomplicated, and he makes use of some farce situations, such as Jack's mourning scene and his recognition scene at the end of the play. But the comedy of *Earnest* subsists, for the most part, not in action or situation but in dialogue. The dialogue, furthermore, is everywhere an exercise of wit—a subtler comic effect than farce can comfortably take very much time for. This is only a tentative claim, to be expanded on later, that the play is a very intellectual kind of comedy, too intellectual, certainly, to be described simply as a farce.

The Importance of Being Earnest is more often, and perhaps somewhat more accurately, regarded as a comedy of manners. Ridicule and exposure of the vanities, the hypocrisies, and the idleness of the upper classes is, to be sure, the main function of its verbal wit. Moreover, the stock patterns of Restoration and eighteenth-century manners comedy are evident in various characters: Jack and Algernon, though in quest of love rather than riches or intrigue, are unmistakably brothers to the opportunistic young wits that hunted in pairs through the social

jungles of earlier comedy; Cecily and Gwendolen are their quarry; Lady Bracknell's is the dowager role, though she is more dominant and more shrewdly financial than her shrill, physical Restoration forebears; but perhaps Miss Prism's middle-aged sexuality, only just contained by the strictures of Victorian propriety, makes her, after all, a more direct descendant of Lady Wishfort.

But *Earnest*, in spite of these qualities, is not a true comedy of manners either. It is not even nearly one. A comedy of manners is fundamentally realistic: it requires the audience to accept the world presented on the stage as a real world, a possible world; and its human foibles, even if heightened and exaggerated in the play's satirical exposure of them, are nevertheless laughed at as representations of real excesses. A clear sign of the realism of manners comedy is the fact that there are characters in it that can always recognize a fool. The laughter that the witty young bucks of the older comedy share with the audience at the expense of a fool or fop unites the "real" world and the world of the play by showing that the same criteria for reason and unreason are valid in both. But Jack and Algernon are strangely respectful of Prism and Chasuble—two clear fools—because fools must be taken seriously in the extra-rational world of Wilde's play. When we recognize this extra-rational quality of Wilde's play, we begin to see that its satirical effects are less close to *The Way of the World* and *The Rivals* than to "The Rape of the Lock" and *Patience*. Where Congreve and Sheridan created a pretty close, if heightened, imitation of that world, Wilde and Gilbert and Pope performed an alchemic *reductio ad absurdum* of it. Folly is represented in the comedy of manners, essentialized in Pope's mock epic, Gilbert's operettas, and Wilde's play.

Wilde accomplishes this essentialization of folly by creating an "as if" world in which "real" values are inverted, reason and unreason interchanged, and the prob-

able defined by improbability. The structure and materials of this "as if" world become especially interesting when we remember that the English theater was, at this time, just beginning to get over a century-long siege of melodrama and sentimentalism. Gwendolen's observation, for example, that "in matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing" has the effect of ridiculing the "poetic" manner of contemporary melodrama, which Robertson and Jones had already rebelled against. Early in Act I, just after Jack has confessed "the whole truth pure and simple" about Cecily and his fictional brother Ernest, Algernon delivers an even more direct and sweeping critical dictum: "The truth," says Algy, "is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility." From this point on, Wilde's play is to be a satiric demonstration of how art can lie romantically about human beings and distort the simple laws of real life with melodramatic complications and improbably easy escapes from them. Wilde has accomplished this by purloining from the hallowed edifice of romantic literature certain standard characters, themes, and plot situations in order to build out of them a comedy that fuses contemporary social satire with a straight-faced taking-off of the usages of the popular fiction and drama of Wilde's time, and, inevitably, of other times as well.

II

Wilde's first technique is to spoof the timeless romantic fictions of love's inception. The myth of love at first sight undergoes a kind of superparody in the scene where Cecily does Algernon's punctual love-making one better by recounting from her "diary" the story of their engagement, his love letters (which she has written), the breaking of their engagement according to the demands of romantic love ritual, and their re-engagement. Cecily's notation of the broken engagement, in its casually

incongruous juxtaposition of values, is reminiscent of Pope's satiric method in "The Rape of the Lock," where the deaths of lap-dogs and of husbands are of equal consequence: "Today I broke off my engagement with Ernest. I feel it is better to do so. The weather still continues charming." Gwendolen's love for Jack is sympathy itself; it is the old romantic idea of spiritual love based on simplicity and Platonic sensibility: "The story of your romantic origin, as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deeper fibers of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me." In a more sacred context, Desdemona, who saw her lover's visage "in his mind" just as Gwendolen sees Jack's in his name, fell in love with Othello for somewhat similar reasons. "My story being done," says Othello, "she gave me for my pains a world of sighs./ She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange, 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful." Othello sums up the nature of her love, and of Gwendolen's, when he says, "She loved me for the dangers I had passed. . . ."

Wilde reinforces his parody of the beautiful innocence of love at first sight and the spiritual impregnability of Platonic love by short-circuiting what our expectations would be if this were either the usual romantic melodrama or a real comedy of manners. Lady Bracknell's cupidity has arisen suddenly as an impediment to both marriages. But while the two young men—who ought to bounce away with a witticism or else do something dashing—are prostrate with devotion, the two young ladies are already making other plans. Gwendolen, the exponent of ideals and ideal love culled from "the more expensive monthly magazines," promises Jack, with superbly hardheaded double vision, that "although [Lady Bracknell] may prevent us from becoming man and wife, and I may marry someone else, and

marry often, nothing can alter my eternal devotion to you." And though Algernon, the true voice of cynicism, is preposterously ready to wait seventeen years until his beloved legally comes of age at thirty-five, Cecily, the unspoiled country lass, belies her simple kind by declining his devotion: "I couldn't wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It makes me rather cross."

A standard complication of the literature of love that is parodied here is the love breach or "misunderstanding"—the lie, the secret sin out of the past, the error in judgment, the buried flaw of character that rises unbidden to the surface—which threatens to destroy love's ideality. But as the cases of Red Crosse and Una, Tom Jones and Sophia, Elizabeth and Darcy, and dozens of others have demonstrated, the breach can usually be healed if the offending party undergoes some penance or performs some act of selfless generosity or courage, whether psychological or material, in order to prove himself. In *Earnest* the love breach occurs when Gwendolen and Cecily discover that their Ernests are impostors named, respectively, Jack and Algernon; and the restoration of love is made possible when Jack and Algernon declare themselves ready to face the horrors of a christening. The situation at this point is so patently ludicrous, and the sentiments expressed by the two girls are at once so absurdly didactic and so resounding with the bathos of melodramatic reconciliation that we can hardly miss, amid the satire of manners, Wilde's strong undercurrent of literary satire.

But perhaps the most impressive evidence that Wilde's play is, in part at least, an elaborate literary lampoon, lies in the circumstances of the two pairs of lovers. The relationship of Algernon to Cecily, first of all, is essentially that of Rochester to Jane Eyre, of Mr. B. to Pamela. It is the situation of the jaded, world-weary, cynical, and preferably dissolute male being reformed, regenerated, and resentimentalized by the fresh, innocent, and

feeling girl reared in isolation from the "world," preferably in the country. Algernon's cynicism is obvious enough in his nastily witty observations on life, and in his boredom with all amusements. The sign of his dissoluteness, one of Wilde's most brilliant comic strokes, is his constant hunger, his entire inability to resist stuffing himself at every opportunity. By this means Wilde has reduced the roué figure to a man of straw—or muffins. And he thrusts him through in the bit of dialogue where Algernon-as-Ernest learns from Cecily that Jack is going to banish him, and that he will have to choose between Australia and "the next world." Cecily questions whether he is good enough even for "this world," and Algy admits that he isn't: "... I want you to reform me. You might make that your mission, if you don't mind." "I'm afraid I haven't time, this afternoon," Cecily responds unfeelingly. In a line or two it turns out, predictably, that Algernon is hungry. "How thoughtless of me," says Cecily. "I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals."

The point of Wilde's satire is found in the nature of Algernon's reformation. Before his first interview with Cecily is over, Algernon is engaged to be married and reconciled to getting christened. But he had already been exploded in his very first exchange with Cecily, when his supposedly irretrievable sophistication is bested by the supposedly artless and sheltered country girl's supersophistication: "I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy." With this the wit has passed from Algernon to Cecily, and he never regains it at any time when she is on the scene. The moral of Wilde's parody: the rake is a fake, girlish innocence is the bait of a monstrous mantrap, the wages of sin is matrimony.

Jack's troubled pursuit of Gwendolen embodies still another stock situation of

romantic love fiction. As classic as *The Winter's Tale*, as old-fashioned as *Caste*, and as modern as last night's television play or last week's movie, it is the problem situation of two lovers separated by a barrier of class difference. Sometimes it is a matter of money, sometimes of blood. But in the majority of cases true love is saved by some last minute miracle, usually a surprising revelation of someone's real identity. The most impressive exercise of this kind is probably in *The Conscious Lovers*, where Steele relieves the long-suffering young Bevil by allowing his indigent sweetheart to prove to be the long lost daughter of Mr. Sealand, the fabulously wealthy parent of the girl Bevil had been unhappily scheduled to couple with in a purely business marriage. The enormity of Steele's resolution is only a little less notable than Wilde's parody of the type. After herding all his characters down to Shropshire to witness the marvels of his *deus ex machina*, Wilde parades before their eyes an extraordinary succession of coincidental revelations culminating in Jack's discovery not only that he is Algernon's brother but that his name really is Ernest.

Wilde delicately frames his recognition scene as a theatrical take-off by making Lady Bracknell say, with lofty aesthetic dread, "In families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. It is hardly considered the thing." Gwendolen, however, is having a splendid time: "The suspense is terrible. I hope it will last."

III

In Edouard Roditi's book *Oscar Wilde* (1947) we read this astonishing statement about *The Importance of Being Earnest* and its stupendous finale:

... its plot is at times too heavily contrived, especially in the last act: the sudden revelation of Miss Prism's past solves too conveniently the problems of the hero's origin, and too many of the embarrassing lies of the play are too neatly resolved into truth. Such reliance on the whimsies of chance weakens

the satire of a comedy of manners; its plot should seem to grow more directly out of the follies of its characters, mirroring the irrationality of an absurd society of human beings responsible for their own predicaments rather than the irresponsible tricks of a contemptibly frivolous destiny. (p. 138)

Mr. Roditi, a critic who takes Wilde very seriously, has mistaken his most celebrated work for an inchoate comedy of manners and has therefore drawn the unfortunately academic conclusion that it is formally imperfect and artistically trivial. The play's "flaws"—the contrivances of plot, the convenience of its coincidences, and the neatness of its resolution—are, of course, its whole point. The subtlety of Wilde's art is such that it is easy to mistake *Earnest* for something it isn't, or else to dismiss it as a charming but inconsequential frill. But if intelligent laughter is better than mere laughter, it is worth understanding what kind of comedy Wilde has achieved by wedding social satire with literary burlesque.

Nothing in the play, first of all, is quite what it seems. The characters seem to wear badges of their natures; yet their sentiments and actions continually revoke and deny them. Jack and Algernon, tagged as clever young worldlings, are really sentimentalists and fussbudgets at heart. Algernon, it has already been pointed out, is quite fully exposed early in Act II. And Jack, though he waves once or twice the flag of cynical wit or clever pretense, worries and perspires through most of the play, muttering pettishly against Algernon's "nonsense" and appetite. He is a fuddled incompetent from the moment, early in Act I, when Algernon first challenges him on the matter of Cecily; and Gwendolen's wooing, only a little later, very nearly shatters him.

This same phenomenon in reverse is true of the two girls. Both of them bear the marks of the romantic Female. Both are pleased, first of all, to represent themselves as "better" than their world: Cecily because she has been preserved, unspoiled,

in countrified isolation, and Gwendolen because she is, in Jack's phrase, "a sensible intellectual girl" whose nature has been enriched by heavy reading and brave thinking. But both also deport themselves as proper young ladies who appear to submit to the wishes of their parents and guardians when the plot requires them to; this is because the true romantic Female is never a stickler for rebellion. Yet these rarefied and genteel girls are the worldliest of schemers. They manipulate their lovers like men on a chess board, and one cannot escape the feeling, furthermore, that even Lady Bracknell prevails ultimately because they permit her to.

The dramatic effect of the comedy, then, is not of foolish but real people flaunting the real world's laws of reason, but of archetypal roles being gravely travestied. The characters know they are in a play, and they know what kind of play it is. Cecily and Gwendolen "do" parodies of themselves as they assist their lovers in their own self-ridiculing transformation from cynical wits to true men of feeling. The same is true of Prism and Chasuble, even of Lane, who knows perfectly well that he is the type of the wry butler-confidant who is smarter than his employer. Lady Bracknell is the only exception: her mind's eye, steadily on the funds, sees other matters—love, literature, virtue—exactly for what they are. She is a kind of choric ballast that weights the satire's indirection with direct scorn.

Wilde's society dramas, which try to come to grips realistically with real problems, are very nearly ruined by the fact that so many of the characters "talk like

Oscar Wilde." But Wilde's specialty, the squinting epigram that is at once murderous and suicidal, is perfectly at home in *Earnest*. It is the verbal function of that queer double consciousness that permeates the whole play and transforms it into a kind of parody. It is quite right that Cecily, who maneuvers under the aegis of wide-eyed innocence, should say of her own journal of unspoiled reactions, "It is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication." Here burlesque of the Miranda character fuses with exposure of a grotesque type of *littérature*. A similar satiric fusion takes place when Cecily discovers that her innocent "nanny," Miss Prism, is, surprisingly, one of the three-volume ladies of Richardsonian sentiment and sensation. Cecily hopes that her novel did not end happily. "The good," answers prim Miss Prism, with shrewd business prowess, "ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what fiction means."

Such passages, deftly worked into the total fabric of the comedy, hold the key to Wilde's methods and purposes. By exposing and burlesquing the vacuities of a moribund literature Wilde satirizes, too, the society that sustains and produces it; he has given us an oblique perspective on a society's shallowness through direct ridicule of the shallow art in which it sees its reflection. It is this subtle merging of matter and form that helps to make *The Importance of Being Earnest* an intellectual tour de force of the first order as well as one of the great comic masterpieces of the theater.

A Short Primer of Educationese

SHELDON P. ZITNER

In their war against the English language, the professors of Education have employed the delays of Fabius in the grade schools. But I do not believe it has been pointed out

that they have tried with the public at large the tactic of Hannibal—elephants. Anything stepped on by an elephant is likely to bear traces of the experience. So it is with

English. The Educationists have driven a herd of wild bull monographs over it, leaving it prostrate with a double hernia of the grammar and severe idiomatic lacerations.

The following primer of the language as it is betrayed in teachers' colleges and departments of education attempts to undo some of the damage by retranslating English into English. Possibly, too, this study of the Educationese dialect will help laymen understand report cards, columns in the *Sunday Times*, and incomprehensible mimeographed letters brought home by school children just before holidays, dental examinations, and visits to the zoo.

It has not been possible in a work so brief to distinguish among the sub-dialects of Educationese: the nasal argot of the teachers' college seminar, the intimate jargon of the principals' workshop, the hearty *lingua franca* of the national convention—to name only a few. Nor was it possible to treat the regional variations of the dialect. The term "democratic education," for example, undergoes a poignant transformation when one leaves the predominantly white Protestant Connecticut township for the red-dirt Georgia county.

However, any pioneer study in so complex a field must accept inevitable limitations. The following structural notes and glossary are sketchy and tentative. With the passage of time we may hope for further intelligible discourse with those to whom the dialect is native, and eventually for the discovery of some Rosetta Stone among the ruins of education.

(1) Structural Notes

(a) *Use of the passive voice.* The active voice of the verb is never employed in Educationese, either in speech or in writing.

Example: Mention was made in that book of a conversation held by the President of the College with the then outgoing coach of squash and related activities. Was this made reference to in your presentation to the seminar on administrative principles and problems?

Perhaps this exclusive use of the passive voice is the syntactical expression of extreme self-abnegation. Perhaps it is a result of the widespread belief in Educationist circles that all actions are initiated, not by lesser agencies, but by the *primum mobile* of Morningside Heights.

(b) *Use of the pathetic fallacy.* One strong characteristic of the dialect is the ready attribution to artifacts of powers normally reserved to human intelligence.

Examples: It will be guaranteed by this curriculum that the student learns. . . . The student will be advised by this notice. . . .

(c) *Use of the heroic catalogue.* This device is similar to the celebrated orders of battle in Homer, although not so exalted.

Example: Tests and Measurements, Practices and Problems, Methods and Materials, Trends and Influences, Growth and Adjustment, and History, Principles and Evolution are expected to be taken by the candidate for the degree in Education.

The almost invariable bifurcation of the catalogue elements should be noted.

(d) *Miscellaneous structural devices.* Among the minor structural devices employed in Educationese are the wandering "which" clause, the orphaned or non-referring pronoun, and the modifying clause which dangles to the extent of oscillation.

(2) Glossary of Educationese

The following is a partial list of Educationese terms in common use. These are invariably employed with the structural-phraseological device of massive circumlocution.

AIM. See ENDS, GOAL, PURPOSE, VALUES.

ALERTNESS CREDIT. Compensation for insomnia.

CHILD, WHOLE. Man of parts, prior to education.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT. The omnipotence of God coupled with the omniscience of man.

COMMITTEE. An instrument of administrative Fabianism.

COMMITTEE, STANDING. Found in colleges with female administrators, although most committees will stand for anything.

CONCLUSION. A suggestion of the President of the College.

CORE CURRICULUM. Metaphoric: the inedible or the indigestible.

CRITERIA. Current whims of the State Board of Education.

DATA. Consensus of hearsay arrived at through a mimeographed questionnaire.

- DEATH.** An imperceptible change in the functioning of a Dean, usually indicated by a brief stoppage of memoranda.
- DEMOCRATIC.** An intensifying adjective used with all abstract nouns.
- DOCUMENTATION.** Reference to those similarly mistaken.
- education.** An obscure process.
- EDUCATION.** A universal science, similar to public relations or capital gains manipulation.
- EDUCATIONAL FRILLS.** See **SUBJECT-MATTER**.
- ENDS.** See **AIM, GOAL, PURPOSE, VALUES**.
- EVOLUTION OF POLICY.** A series of related blunders of increasing intensity.
- EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH.** The rigorous application of rumor to the determination of fact.
- FACULTY MEETING.** A public occasion for begging the question.
- FLEXIBILITY OF CURRICULUM.** Ambiguous wording of catalogue requirements.
- FOUNDATION.** A means of support.
- FREEDOM, ACADEMIC.** A regional question under discussion at one time in California.
- GOAL.** See **AIM, ENDS, PURPOSE, VALUES**.
- GROUP APPROACH.** The use of force.
- GROUP DYNAMICS.** One-upmanship waged against children.
- GROUP PROCESS.** Plagiarism.
- GUIDANCE, or COUNSELING.** The juditsu of persuasion.
- HUMANIST.** Opponent of **EDUCATION**; hence an anti-intellectual.
- IMPLEMENTATION.** The final section of a motion to table.
- INTELLIGENCE.** A dangerous form of exhibitionism.
- MEDIOCRITY.** See **AIM, ENDS, GOAL, PURPOSE, VALUES**.
- METHODOLOGY.** A means of insuring failure.
- MOTIVATION.** The supplanting of curiosity by self-interest.
- NEEDS, BASIC.** Buick.
- OBJECTIVE METHOD OF INVESTIGATION.** Consultation of one's immediate superiors.
- ONGOING SOCIETY.** Board of Trustees.
- PERSONNEL POINT OF VIEW.** Severe myopia with astigmatism in both eyes.
- PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION.** The happy tedium.
- PRINCIPLE, EDUCATIONAL.** On the high school level, **PRINCIPAL**—not a spelling error, but a failure of nerve.
- PURPOSE.** See **AIM, ENDS, GOAL, VALUES**.
- RESEARCH.** Like romantic love, a folly of youth and old age.
- RESOURCE PERSON.** Dean of School of Education with power to hire.
- SELF-STUDY.** The only form of prejudice wholly without malice.
- STRUCTURING THE SITUATION.** Vulgarly, loading the dice.
- STUDENT.** Element, factor, or phase in the total classroom situation.
- STUDENT—DISADVANTAGED, RETARDED, EXCEPTIONAL, PROMISING.** A moron.
- SUBJECT-MATTER.** No satisfactory definition of this term can be found in the current literature; this is a neglected area which may provide several good thesis topics.
- TEACHERS COLLEGE.** Where the ignorant are incited to impart their knowledge to the indifferent.
- TEACHING.** A method of indoctrination.
- TRANSITION, AGE OF.** Any span of ten years between Comenius and Dewey.
- VALIDATION.** Finding out how they feel about it at Columbia.
- VALUES.** See **AIM, ENDS, GOAL, PURPOSE**.
- VERITIES, ETERNAL.** See current catalogue, Teachers College.

Trends in Post-Revolutionary Irish Literature

LAWRENCE J. McCAFFREY

BEGINNING in the late nineteenth century, Ireland experienced a literary revival inspired by investigations into pre-Christian and early Christian Irish history and a renewed interest in the Irish language. It is rather surprising to note that the most prominent figures in the literary renaissance were nearly all Anglo-Irish Protestants. In spite of class and religious background, these men were cultural nationalists hostile to English rule in Ireland, not so much for its extinction of political freedom, but for its attempt to suppress a distinct, creative, and worthwhile Irish culture. Like many of the language scholars, they were attempting to restore the values of the ancient Gaelic culture by recalling its brilliance to young Irish men and women of their own time.

It was to peasant Ireland that the writers turned for their inspiration and messiah to restore the ancient civilization. The folk tales, the belief in the supernatural (both Christian and pagan), and in some instances the Irish language were best preserved among the agricultural population. To indicate the cultural continuity between the age of the pre-Christian heroes and the era of the modern Irish farmer, the writers often translated the ancient sagas into the speech of nineteenth and twentieth century Irish peasants, with the heroes of old depicted in poems, in novels, and on the stage as peasant lads and lasses. One of the outstanding examples of this literary device is Synge's *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, a beautiful and self-revealing interpretation of the Deirdre legend. In the play, Synge's last, Deirdre is pictured as an unfortunate peasant girl, a victim of the lusts of an old man, Conchobar king of Ulster, and the sons of Usna

are presented as light-hearted country lads caught in Deirdre's tragic fate. Vivid realism is added to the play by the obvious similarity of the characters in speech and action to rural Irishmen of the twentieth century.

Early Irish revival literature is romantic in its appeal to the emotions and its idealization of the beauty and virtue of peasant life. Comparisons can be made between German cultural nationalist writers of the early nineteenth century and the Celtic Twilighters. To the literary men of both countries, the peasant retained all that was best in the cultural heritage of the people, while other segments of the population had severed themselves from the "racial soul." Both the German and Irish writers opposed the materialism of their time, a materialism that resulted from alien influences, and in the peasant they beheld the spiritual bastion withstanding the siege of the hated enemy.

These Irish romantic writers made little or no attempt to come to grips with the contemporary economic, social, or political problems. Yet in spite of their lack of realism and their nostalgia, the writers of the revival played a significant role in the national awakening, and deserved a great deal of credit for the success of the independence movement. Patrick Pearse, a member of the romantic school of Irish writing, led into the Dublin Post Office in 1916 men who were inspired by the appeal of cultural nationalism.

During and after the revolutionary period, 1916-1922, many writers—Yeats, A. E., Colum, Stephens, and Clarke—continue to write in the romantic tradition. However, the revolution produces a new group of writers, who, while they pay

their respects to their predecessors, have a much different approach to their subject material. These men are, for the most part, Catholics of the working or lower middle class. They accept cultural and political nationalism, but what is distinctive about them is that they represent the social and economic aspects of the Irish independence movement. To them, Irish freedom means much more than separation from England and the restoration of an ancient language and culture; it is also a prelude to progress, prosperity, cultural advances, social reform, economic opportunities for the young, and an end to emigration as a panacea for Ireland's ills.

The new writers treat their subject material realistically and not romantically. In this they follow the Joyce rather than the Yeats' tradition. In Liam O'Flaherty's novel *Famine*, or Patrick Kavanagh's novel *Tarry Flynn* and his poem *The Great Hunger*, the life of the Irish peasant is anything but glamorous. It is a continual struggle for existence on small farms, tilling poor soil with primitive agricultural methods. Years of landlord domination have killed the farmer's initiative and his goal has become mere survival. Hospitality and spirituality, virtues admired by the romantic writers, have in many instances been corrupted by economic hardship resulting in thrift to the point of meanness—the very worst form of materialism. Rather than face the hardship of raising children in the midst of economic poverty, the Irish farmer is reluctant to marry, and in many cases deserts the farm altogether, leaving Ireland a land of old people. As one can see, in the content of post-revolutionary Irish writing, the concept of the "noble peasant" has undergone a significant change.

Unlike their predecessors, the new writers are as much concerned with the problems of city and town dwellers as they are with the rural population. Slum life is described in detail; sympathy is extended to talented youth denied economic opportunities, leaving them the alternative

of marginal subsistence in Ireland or emigration. Sean O'Casey, in the first three volumes of his autobiography and in his early plays, presents an illuminating picture of social and economic conditions among the tenement-dwelling Dublin proletariat.

Disillusionment and frustration are the dominant themes in post-revolutionary Irish writing. The prosperous, progressive little republic expected by the social and economic revolutionaries has failed to materialize. Ireland, or at least the twenty-six counties, is politically independent, but the slums continue to exist, the Irish farmer in many cases is still on the verge of starvation, economic opportunities for the young have failed to appear, there has been no extensive social reform, the people as a whole demonstrate little interest in culture, and the youth of the country continue to emigrate. Most disheartening of all, to the Irish writer, has been the unwillingness of the Irish people to undertake the task of reconstructing and improving their country after their magnificent and heroic effort to liberate it from foreign control. Instead, they have settled down to resume the long quiet sleep that was momentarily interrupted by the revolution. The big businesses remain in the hands of the Anglo-Irish Unionists, and the new Catholic middle class seems as indifferent to social reform as its alien predecessors. The Irish writers are convinced that nationalism, Irish Catholicism, and conservatism are responsible for Ireland's failure to advance, and the bulk of their published work is devoted to exposing the limitations and harmful effects of these three detriments to progress.

Most of the writers produced by the revolutionary period were at one time enthusiastic nationalists. O'Connor and O'Faolain fought in the Republican Army, and O'Casey was an active member of Jim Connolly's nationalist orientated labor movement. It is not nationalism that offends them, but its limited nature in Ireland, and its corrup-

tion into chauvinism. Politicians exploit past wrongs and Anglophobia in order to confuse political issues and sidetrack economic and social reform. Businessmen demand tariffs on foreign manufactures on the pretense of developing native industry, and then impose faulty goods on the Irish buyer. Politicians and the Catholic clergy use nationalism to isolate Ireland from the world, an effort which, while it might for a time preserve Ireland from the unrest troubling other nations, has the unfortunate consequence of cutting her off from the main stream of European culture. For criticizing these conditions the writer is labeled subversive and unpatriotic by the professional nationalists. In fact, any exception taken to the status quo is violently resented by many Irishmen as a betrayal of the nationalist cause. Ireland is a tight little community with a thin skin and an exaggerated and often irrational patriotism that demands silence on issues that might bruise its feelings, even if silence means the continuation of serious abuses. This denial by the populace of the right to criticize has done much to embitter and frustrate the writer.

In recent years, the Catholic Church in England and on the Continent has attracted the allegiance of a number of talented persons who have instilled new vitality into Catholic intellectual life. In Ireland, however, the activities of the Church drives the intellectual into opposition, exile, and sometimes out of the Church. Most of the Catholic clergy come from the traditionally conservative and anti-intellectual peasant class, and they resent what they consider the pretensions of lay intellectualism and leadership. The clergy, more than any other pressure group, supports Ireland's cultural isolation from the "pagan world." As a result, they are strong advocates of a book censorship which not only bans the best works of non-Catholic writers, but the outstanding literary productions of Irish and English Catholic writers such as Waugh, Greene, O'Faolain, and Kate

O'Brien, to name a few. They insist that censorship protects the moral fibre of Irish life from all alien, secular, immoral, and subversive ideas. Catholic writers in Ireland absolve the Church as such for the local foibles of its Irish branch. O'Faolain, in *A Summer in Italy*, announces his conversion to Roman Catholicism, as distinct from Irish Catholicism, and adds that he "left a nation and joined an empire."

Jansenist influences have been discernible in Ireland since the eighteenth century when there was a close connection between the Irish and French Churches, and has merited a good deal of attention from the writers. It is held partly responsible for the dullness of Irish provincial life, and this substitution of prudishness for Christian purity has encouraged Irishmen to marry late, if they marry at all, thereby creating a serious problem of depopulation. The writers also object to the tendency of the Catholic hierarchy to equate nationalism and Catholicism. This alienates the talented Protestant minority whose services the Republic badly needs. They constantly remind the bishops that the are johnny-come-latelys as far as nationalism is concerned, for their opposition to nationalist movements and leaders in the nineteenth century seriously retarded the attainment of Irish independence. Parnell is the writer's symbol of resistance to clerical despotism. In Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, O'Casey's *Pictures in the Hallway*, and O'Faolain's great novel *Bird Alone*, Parnell emerges as Ireland's most talented leader, and his clerical opponents as spiteful enemies of the national cause.

The writers accuse the Catholic hierarchy of indifference to the economic and social welfare of the members of its flock. The bishops have allied themselves with political reactionaries to throttle legislation that would alleviate some of the serious social problems that beset the country. This clerical conservatism does not content itself with mere protest against re-

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form, but actively interferes with the political life of the country by putting pressure on Irish legislators. O'Faolain has accused the bishops of establishing a second parliament in the country, not responsible to the people. This he believes endangers the democratic institutions of the Republic.

Irishmen in general seem to concur in the conservatism of their clergy and political leaders. For the writer who expected the enthusiasm of the revolution to produce beneficial changes in all phases of Irish life, this self-satisfaction and smugness of his fellow countrymen is disturbing. He wants them to quit wasting their time in dreaming of the past, and instead to carry the revolution through to a successful close. One young writer, John Montague, is convinced that the Irish environment is making the Irish writer so discontented that he is becoming neurotic. He writes: "If anyone thinks I am exaggerating the mild horror of it, let him observe the heavy, almost neurotic shadows that lie over the best Irish writing of the past fifteen years: *Dutch Interior*, for instance, or *Watergate*, or *Tarry Flynn*, or *Bird Alone*, all good work that we have no reason to be ashamed of, but almost always on the single theme of frustration, the sensitive striving to exist within an unsatisfactory society where the intellect and the flesh are almost regarded as ancient heresies" (*The Bell*, Oct. 1951).

Many of Frank O'Connor's short stories are devoted to criticizing the smugness, hypocrisy, idle gossip, and the dead hand of tradition that constitutes so much of Irish life. It is interesting to contrast O'Connor's novel, *Dutch Interior*, with Daniel Corkery's excellent work, *The Threshold of Quiet*. Both deal with the same subject, the life of young men in Cork, the Republic's second largest city. Corkery is quite satisfied with the conservatism of Irish life and compares it favorably with the chaos in other lands. He is also content with Irish Catholicism and attributes the comparative happiness

of the Irish people to their devotion and willingness to follow the teaching of their spiritual leaders. Martin Cloyne (Corkery's principal character) is a young man who finds his enjoyment in conversation with friends, reading, and contemplation before a fire in his study. O'Connor, a man of action, protests against the inactivity of conversation and contemplation. His young men either emigrate or remain in Cork, permitting the provincial atmosphere to crush their talent, leaving them bitter and frustrated to face a bleak future. This criticism of nationalism turned chauvinism, of Jansenistic authoritarian Catholicism, and of the smug conservatism of Irish life is remarkably coalesced in a short story "The Wearing of the Green," written by James Plunkett, one of the more promising young Irish writers.

Recently critics have expressed a fear that the renaissance in Irish letters has come to a close. Many of the most talented Irish writers are well into their fifties and few promising young men are coming to the front. There are those who claim that the conservatism and anti-intellectualism of Irish life discourages young talent. No doubt there is some truth in this contention, but an unfavorable environment should produce a literature of protest. It is not an exaggeration to say that post-revolutionary writing is a literature of discontent. Is the present generation of Irish writers going to meekly submit to the restrictions of Irish society or is it going to carry on in the tradition of the preceding generation? If James Plunkett is an example, the young Irish writer still raises his voice to protest against a suffocating conformity.

However, the grievances that helped inspire modern Irish literature also pose a threat to a continued standard of excellence. The writing may tend to become repetitious in its dissent from the status quo. Literature that constantly criticizes and preaches reform often becomes so bitter and cynical that it fails to observe or it

deemphasizes the more pleasant characteristics of a civilization. This leads to another problem. What aspects of Irish life can the writer discuss? The most prominent influence in Irish society is the Catholic Church, and this unique form of Catholicism is hardly a subject for sympathetic treatment. The writer who ignores the issue of the Church must write character sketches or about small incidents in the lives of Irishmen. This the Irish writer does well, but such material is best presented in short story form, and maybe that is why the short story is much more characteristic of Irish writing than the novel.

It must be remembered that for a small country, Ireland in the last half century

has produced an almost miraculous abundance of talented writers. It is reasonable to suppose that Irish writing may not be declining but just leveling off. The preceding generation of writers lived in a period of excitement and national enthusiasm, but the revolutionary era is over. Ireland is a small agricultural country and will no doubt remain so. The young writer will have to recognize this historical reality and adjust himself to the situation. Once this adjustment is accomplished, the wit, humor, and imagination of Irishmen leads one to expect an increased productivity from the young writer, and readers will be entertained by a continued high level of competency in Irish literature.

Elizabeth Bowen's World of Impoverished Love

BARBARA SEWARD

WITH the recent publication of *A World of Love*, Elizabeth Bowen has renewed her claim on serious critical attention. Curiously, to date she has been given little such attention, although she is generally recognized as one of our foremost writers. More curiously, what attention she has received has tended to ignore the full significance of her work by overstressing her compassion for the innocent idealist trapped in the modern world. Certainly Miss Bowen is enormously sympathetic to the idealist who is desolated by a callous society; nevertheless she is equally aware that the callous society is itself made up of desolated idealists. And, more fundamentally, she perceives that the root of the trouble is in the ideals themselves, that society is in its present negative condition because too many individuals have for too long been pursuing unfulfillable romantic desires at the expense of immediate, living realities. Appalled by the

tragic inability of our world to meet the demands of the innocent romantic, Miss Bowen has throughout her career been still more appalled by the romantic's inability to meet the crying demands of our world.

In all of her novels an exalted and uncompromising love breaks its wings against the wall of contemporary society. The earlier novels explore the immediate tragedy of uncorrupt, idealistic love in an age that is neither uncorrupt nor idealistic, while *A World of Love* is concerned with three women who have drowned the present in their love for a man killed in the first World War. Although the change in the latest novel from love for the living to love for the dead reflects a certain difference between pre- and post-war attitudes, this difference is not basic. The resemblance between the earlier heroine's idea of her beloved and his actual nature is at best no greater than the resemblance

between a ghost and a living man. And the innocent girl lost in her dream of love is no more capable of handling the realities of her world than are the women who have ceased to wind their clocks with the death of a soldier in World War I. Miss Bowen explores a persistent theme—the tragic dangers of romantic excesses in the twentieth century—although she modifies and adapts that theme to meet the requirements of a society that has altered in superficials but continues to make the same fundamental mistake.

In the six pre-World War II novels, from *The Hotel* (1927) through *The Death of the Heart* (1939), the pattern in which her theme is presented resembles that of classical tragedy. A heroine of great stature is marred by a single flaw or weakness which brings about her downfall. The weakness, one that might normally lie dormant throughout the heroine's life, is brought out and enhanced by the warped characters among whom she finds herself. And the catastrophe that results from this combination of inner flaw and outer circumstance is disastrous not only to the heroine but also to all others involved. In classical tragedy, however, individuals are morally culpable in that they knowingly overreach themselves, whereas in Miss Bowen's work they commit their errors blindly as victims of forces they can neither recognize nor control. Her most brittle and vicious sophisticates share with her most idealistic heroines a common and terrible injustice: all have alike been irrevocably deprived of the fruitful lives they might have led.

The innocents are the more sympathetic since they have not yet lost faith, hope, and trust. We meet them on the threshold of experience, young, sensitive, not happy, but unconsciously awaiting a greater thing than happiness. Because they are still uncorrupted and emotionally unimpaired, they are inevitably strangers to their deficient family or social circles. Of necessity they exist in an inner realm of private dreams, and, like most romantic dreamers,

seek to verify their ideals by giving them life in the external world. Reaching out to the remote because the near-at-hand is uncongenial, they generally manage to fall in love with men who are not accepted in their immediate social spheres. Lois's Gerald (*The Last September*), Emmeline's Markie (*To The North*), Karen's Max (*The House in Paris*), and Portia's Eddie (*The Death of the Heart*) derive at least part of their appeal from being of a divergent walk of life and so representing relief or refuge from the unsatisfying familiar. When Karen explains to Max her reasons for keeping their love tryst, she speaks of her home and family in terms that the other heroines would understand too well: "I found I was in prison—no, locked into a museum. . . . They keep me away from everything that has power; they would be frightened of art if I painted really well."

But while the bluebird of bliss is certainly not in their own back yards, neither is it to be found in any other place on the modern scene. The innocent girls at first fail to perceive this because, since they chiefly exist in the realm of private emotions, they tend to project these emotions onto the world, mistaking inner longing for external fact. As Miss Bowen observes: "In the first great phase of love . . . the beloved is not outside one. . . . In this dumb, exalted and exalting confusion, what actually happens plays very little part" (*The Death of the Heart*). If Sydney is blind to Mrs. Kerr's coldness (*The Hotel*), Janet to Edward's weakness (*Friends and Relations*), Emmeline to Markie's egotism, and Portia to Eddie's duplicity, it is because in every instance the introverted heroine interprets her beloved in terms of her own ideal, is in fact more in love with her private dream than with an actual human being.

Yet it is because of this that their love has so much beauty. If the heroines were not introverted idealists with little experience beyond their own personal emotions, they would probably not have attained the

same totality of love. If they were not isolated from the hollow society around them, they would not have been able to bring to love uncorrupted and undiminished hearts. It is because they are alone, romantic, unaware of the prevailing tawdriness of things that they are capable of love in the grand manner, are capable of an unhesitant, uncompromising devotion that can hold back nothing and means no less than everything. One of the tragic facts about life as Miss Bowen sees it is that pure and absolute love demands for its existence at least a partial ignorance of the true nature of our world.

Far more tragic, however, are the effects of such ignorance. "It is not only our fate but our business to lose innocence," writes Miss Bowen in "Out of a Book" (*Collected Impressions*, 1950); she shows in her novels that innocence cannot and should not last because it is a product of romantic youth having devastating results in the adult world. It is first of all devastating to the innocent themselves, as the disparity between their ideals and the truth is gradually revealed to them. Emmeline, driven literally to her death by the loss of her illusion, is perhaps the most striking example. But we are given the unmistakable impression that Janet, Karen, and even Portia have also little left to hope for from life. Had their love been less unknowing, less immoderate from the outset, it might have borne less bitter fruit.

And it is not only the innocent heroines who suffer the effects of their intemperate romanticism. All of those whom they love and many with whom they are associated come in for more than a full share of pain. The love objects in most cases undergo with the heroines a loss of illusions, but where the heroines lose illusions about their beloveds, the beloveds lose illusions about themselves. The mounting distress Markie feels with Emmeline may be taken as representative: "Her goodness had an unconscious royalty and was overbearing: under her too high idea of life and himself some part of him groaned, involun-

tary" (*To The North*, 1950). Certainly Mrs. Kerr's final desolation by Sydney, Edward's decade-long fear of Janet, and Eddie's increasing horror of Portia all spring from a similar source. In each instance the beloved, measured against perfection's rod, sees himself fall appallingly short, and is left in the end with as bleak a vision as that of the heroines themselves.

Even the comparatively uninvolved bystanders fall victim to the ravages of innocence. Sydney's Mr. Milton and Janet's sister Laurel are deeply and unjustly hurt because they happen to be in the path of impetuous romantic love. Equally unjust and scarcely less serious is the hurt Major Brutt receives when Portia heedlessly and permanently closes Anna's doors to him. But perhaps most terrible of all is the havoc Karen leaves behind her, ruining the life of her dearest friend, contributing directly to her mother's death, and leaving her child to be brought up by well-meaning, incompetent strangers. None of these girls ever viciously or deliberately injures others, but all remain so intent upon their grand obsessions that they are insufficiently aware of the damage they may do: "Their singleness, their ruthlessness, their one continuous wish makes them bound to be cruel and to suffer cruelty" (*The Death of the Heart*). Cut off from other people's values by their private dreams, the idealistic heroines are as great a menace to society as is society to them.

Ironically, in the last analysis their very purity is their tragic flaw. If they cannot understand other people's values, it is simply that those values are too corrupt for them; if they cannot love other people for what they are and not for what they ought to be, it is that, having encountered no guile within themselves, they have no way of recognizing guile in others. The romantic innocents are doomed to destroy themselves and those around them not because they share our failings but because as yet they largely lack them. Lacking them, they have no basis for human interaction, are bound to make mistakes and to

bring about unhappiness. Their existence in a more exalted sphere than ours destines them to solitude and so to tragedy. For in their isolation they are anti-social in a world in which one cannot and must not live alone.

They are, however, more sinned against than sinning. Idealistic innocence is romantic and anti-social because present-day society falls so markedly short of perfection that uncompromising idealists can find no outlets for themselves. As Eddie protests to Portia, "How can we grow up when there's nothing left to inherit, when what we must feed on is so stale and corrupt?" But while the pure in heart are doomed by their isolation from modern life, the society that can find no place in itself for innocence is at least as desolating a spectacle as is that of innocence betrayed. To understand the full import of Elizabeth Bowen's pre-war novels, one must look beyond the central characters to the contemporary social background against which their tragedies are played out. Here, thrown into relief by the heroine's heroic standards, the decadence of our era is glaringly revealed.

The particular segments of modern society analyzed in these novels are the British upper and middle classes. Here in microcosm Miss Bowen sees operating the same forces that are destroying individuals and nations throughout our civilization today. In her view both classes are suffering, like her heroines, from what she has called "the disorientated romanticism of the age" (*Collected Impressions*); but unlike the heroines, her typical members of upper and middle classes are not dominated and broken by transcendent dreams of love. Their romantic longings, no less destructive or impossible, are a great deal less attractive. For while the heroines cannot adjust to this world because they feel too deeply for mistaken things, the people around them, equally mistaken, cannot adjust because too often they fear to feel at all.

The upper classes in particular, shaken

by the present, are shown as lifelessly clinging to the dry husks of the past. Having lost the power and respect they commanded in earlier eras, they seek to ignore their loss by maintaining desperate shadows of traditions that now lack body. For example, all the habiliments of gracious living are preserved—tennis parties, dinners, servants, proper dress, and appropriate talk. But the true grace has quite gone out of them: where once there was warmth and concern for others, the desire to impress alone remains. The same conditions prevail in the narrower orbit of the home. That of the Quaynes in *The Death of the Heart* is a typical example: "In this airy vivacious house, all mirrors and polish, there was no place where shadows lodged, no point where 'feeling could thicken. The rooms were set for strangers' intimacy, or else for exhausted solitary retreat." Whether (as in *The Hotel*) the family homestead has been abandoned, or (as in the ensuing novels) it is elegantly maintained, the vital ingredients of family custom and family intimacy have been lost. Without these the upper class houses, however stately and impressive, remain at best but chilly monuments of the unrecapiturable past.

At worst they become the breeding grounds of cold or ruined lives. Hugo Montmorency, forever regretting the trip to Canada he lacked the vitality to make, and Karen Michaelis's Aunt Violet, passively dying of cancer to the life she never lived, symbolize the decay of a class unadapted to present conditions. Edward Tilney, broken by the scandal of his mother Elfrida's love, is the product of a frightened society clutching morality's outward forms in the absence of inner substance. Mrs. Kerr, Lady Naylor, and Anna Quayne, hardened against emotion, brittle and ruthless in human relationships, typify the defensive position of those raised in a loveless and vulnerable realm. Unwilling or unable to adjust to a new order, and afraid of caring too much for the old that is crumbling under their

feet, Miss Bowen's upper class people remain suspended between two worlds, hopelessly engaged in making the worst of both.

These characters, even the vicious, are treated with compassion. Like everyone else in the novels, they remain as much victims as victimizers because they are weak, unaware, or blighted by their environment. But the point is inescapable: upper-class England in the twentieth century is a sterile and decadent phenomenon, frantically fleeing the demands of the present in the futile pursuit of the past. Far from being a snob, as she has astonishingly been labeled (see Elizabeth Hardwick, *PR*, 16, 1949, 1114-1121), Elizabeth Bowen is terribly aware of the dangers and weaknesses of her own class. Far from being suffused with romantic nostalgia for the golden age of the aristocracy, she is attacking that very nostalgia as a force that is blighting a whole social group.

She does not, however, view the middle class in rosier light. Whereas the upper class has lost the old values of home and social position, the middle class has never possessed them. To Miss Bowen these things are important. Having a home that is really one's own, in which one's ancestors have lived, gives one a sense of belonging, of being a link in an unbroken chain. Having some sort of social status, being accepted as part of a definite group, gives one a sense of security and of individual worth. Lacking these stabilizing conditions, the middle class as Miss Bowen presents them are "tangles of mean motives" (*The House in Paris*), a rootless, restless lot. Unsure of themselves and afraid of others, they remain in constant competition for prizes they do not really want and strive incessantly for power they do not know how to use.

Emmeline's Markie and Portia's Eddie are products of this unfortunate class. Cut from similar cloth, each exhibits insecurity and ego-weakness, most notably in his love relationship. Markie wants and

thinks he loves Emmeline because she represents to him something he cannot attain; to prove his own worth he attempts to rule her, and when he cannot, he resents her. Eddie seeks out Portia's affections because she serves as a link with Anna's upper class world and because her devotion flatters his ego; when the ego-boosting backfires and her innocence shows him his smallness, true to type he turns against her. But if Markie and Eddie are dismal examples of Miss Bowen's middle class, they are tame beside Mme. Fisher and her fatal Paris house. For this powerful misuser of power, who finds her life's greatest fulfillment in driving Max Ebhart to suicide, dwarfs all the other middle class characters as a symbol of the extreme to which the need for self-assertion can go.

The trouble with Mme. Fisher and her weaker counterparts is that they lack clearly defined directions in which to channel their energies. Miss Bowen has explicitly stated: "The outsize will is not necessarily an evil; it is a phenomenon. It must have its outsize outlet, its big task. If the right scope is not offered it, it must seize the wrong" (*Bowen's Court*, 1942). Her novels show that too often middle class people are not offered the right scope, for they have been born to no definite status, have no real homes or connections to cultivate, no preordained niche in the social scheme. Thrown back on their own resources to rise or fall by their own worth, they are driven to prove themselves somehow, too often at each other's expense. Society, failing to provide men's egos with sufficient positive outlets, has left the ambitious to prey on each other in an animalistic void. Energetic individualism, with its worship of the striving will, is a middle class aspect of romanticism that has worn dangerously thin.

The public predicament is then at the heart of the personal disaster. Coming upon a world in which the upper class has atrophied and the middle is tearing itself apart, innocence has small chance for

survival. Since man is a social animal, he must either accept his impossible world or be annihilated by it, must either make Karen's meager compromise or suffer Emmeline's violent death. Either way he is defeated and in turn perpetuates defeat. For the thing is of course a vicious circle: the society that breaks the individual is made up of broken individuals; the cold and ruthless characters, from Mrs. Kerr to Anna, were once as uncorrupted as any of the heroines. The tragedy of an innocent girl, reflecting that of the people around her, expands beyond the individual to become the tragedy of an era and a misdirected way of life.

In the six pre-war novels no remedy is offered. The disease must get worse before it gets better; man must come to some sort of awareness of his predicament before he can set about to resolve it. Miss Bowen shows in these novels that twentieth-century society between world wars was still pursuing nineteenth-century dreams of personal glory, traditional sanctity, or superhuman love, without sufficient awareness that the dreams had turned to nightmare. She shows that the dreams had turned to nightmare not only because they were out of date but because they were egotistical, asocial or anti-social, and unrealizable in the actual world. Using each other without charity or scruple to fulfill unfulfillable personal fantasies, men were blindly destroying all social cohesion and rushing their world towards inevitable disaster.

The Heat of the Day (1949), written during the war, records this disaster. In it the same forces that were at work in her earlier novels are shown to have been carried to frightening conclusions. Where love was previously doomed because it was innocent and based on illusion, it is here doomed because the sky has fallen and there is no longer any shelter even for mature, well-founded love. Where the individual was previously doomed because he was unable to adapt himself to his society, he is here doomed because there is

virtually no society left to adapt to. But the tragedy that has expanded to annihilating proportions is shown to have sprung from the same bewildered roots. "Fantasy is toxic," writes Miss Bowen in *Bowen's Court*: "the private cruelty and the world war both have their start in the heated brain." In her wartime novel she presents more graphically even than before the inseparable relationship between the diseased romanticism of individuals and the havoc of the world at large.

Robert Kelway, whose very photograph reveals "romanticism fired once too often," is the most vivid example. A member of the rootless middle class, he is meant to represent the forces within that class that can work for fascism. His home, loveless and perpetually for sale, symbolizes the sterile, transient environment Miss Bowen sees as prevalent on his social level; his romantic worship of the fascist ideal because it offers the individual a definite place in a definite order, springs from the desperate insecurity she feels is corollary to the middle-class emphasis on untrammelled individualism for its own sake. "Freedom," says Robert, "Freedom to be what?—the muddled; mediocre, damned." His treason is a tragic commentary on a society that has run the risk of losing its invaluable freedom by failing to give its members anything else. For the free also need constructive outlets for their energies, need to feel that their lives derive enduring value through contributing to an order greater than themselves.

While Robert carries to ruinous ends the misguided quest for self-realization we have seen driving earlier middle-class characters, Stella reveals the total collapse of the upper class orientation. She has given up the last of her houses and now lives homeless in rented flats, and she has been outcast from her social group by the scandal of modern divorce. A "soul astray" in her class and her world, she has become acutely aware of the aristocracy's disintegration; her thoughts at her cousin's home, Mount Morris, make this ap-

pallingly clear: "Was it not here in this room and under this illusion that Cousin Nettie Morris—and who now knew how many more before her?—had been pressed back, hour by hour, by the hours themselves, into cloudland? Ladies had gone not quite mad, not quite even that, from in vain listening for meaning in the loudening tick of the clock." Time, gaining in the earlier novels on a class that clung to the past, has by the second world war won its devastating victory.

Unfortunately time's devastation embraces more than a single class; it embraces a whole era and that era's chance for love. Stella and Robert, their world crumbling, see their one sound and solid abode in love; but this too is doomed from the outset, for love cannot stand where all else falls: "They were not alone, nor had they been from the start, from the start of love. Their time sat in the third place at their table. They were the creatures of history. . . . The relation of people to each other is subject to the relation of each to time." Here, as in all the earlier novels, external society's corruptions close fatally in on love. But there is a difference now in degree: this time the destruction is final and there is no possible future for Stella and Robert's love or for that of the generation whose tragedy they enact.

Not all hope is lost, however. Though the older generation is shattered, there is a chance that the young may rebuild the world. Stella's son Roderick, who has the realism to adapt Mount Morris to modern times, may revive in the post-war world the enduring values of home. Louie, whose natural son is born in despite of social constrictions, may revive the values of parenthood and the undeflected heart. The hope of the future lies with these two and with the generation they represent. Here for the first time in her fiction Miss Bowen has offered a possible remedy for society's long disease, perhaps because in its greatest crisis the patient more fiercely than ever needs help.

In *A World of Love* (1955) this positive tendency becomes considerably more

pronounced, carries in fact the book's principal import. The tragic world, though still present and certainly not unimportant, is no longer complete in itself but rather serves as essential background to a now affirmative foreground. Nevertheless, Miss Bowen's theme, like the society she writes of, has undergone no radical changes. The generation she presented as broken by war in *The Heat of the Day* is perceived in no happier light from the post-war point of view. The younger generation, hope of the future in the preceding work, carries the same vital role in this. And cutting across the generations, the basic warning against romantic extremism that has run through her novels from first to last is, in *A World of Love*, more distinctly than ever restressed.

The whole tragic aspect of the story is shown to have romantic roots. Antonia and Lilia, middle-aged when the book opens, are still in love with a man who was killed in their early youth. Each has repeated the usual pattern of an idealistic love, doomed by external conditions (World War I in this instance), and not to be lived up to in later life. These particular women, however, seem even worse off than usual. For where the broken-hearted in earlier novels generally managed at least a poor compromise future, these two have been unable to do anything further with life at all. It's true that one has married and the other has had a career, but emotionally they have advanced not one moment beyond Guy's death. "The living were living in his lifetime," Antonia perceives: "They were incomplete." More serious still, they are virtually ghosts casting over the present the past's fatal shadow.

For in a real sense their impassive existence is more negative than death. Not only have they ceased to acknowledge the present by ignoring calendars and clocks, allowing their home to become defunct, withdrawing from social interaction, but they have lost the vitality even of memory. The discovery of Guy's letters is for them a painful ordeal because it forces

upon them emotion, reminding them of what they were and so of what they have become. And their condition is not unique: it is that of their whole generation, as the party at Lady Latterly's is intended to make clear. For with its Alice-in-Wonderland unreality, Lady Latterly's "phantasmagoric . . . circle of the displaced rich" reproduces on larger canvas a similar picture to Antonia's home. In both atmospheres alike the too-vivid recollection of Guy electrifies the dead air with an energy studiously unwelcomed for more than thirty years.

The trouble with these people is that they have endured too much too long. Having lived through two great wars, they have seen the world they were born to demolished, have suffered the betrayal of faith and love, and so turned in dread or exhaustion from the demands of an alien future. They are less to be blamed than pitied, and there is even a point or two in their favor: What is left of our age after war's devastations offers little to attract the heart. But what he and the rest of them fail to acknowledge is that each individual is responsible for rebuilding a possible world, and that in seceding from the present they are not only stultifying their own lives but imperiling the chance of the next generation to work out mankind's salvation.

Lilia's daughter Jane, for example, has grown up under her elders' shadow. As a result she has been for too many years "without emotional curiosity"; and when she does fall in love, at the start of the story, it is inevitably with the seeming ghost of Guy, the sole emotional magnet in her enervated environment. But while she appears to be a victim of the same romantic nostalgia that afflicts the adult world around her, she turns out to be the means of breaking its enchantment. For Jane, unlike the others, wants to bring her ghost alive into the here and now instead of burying it and herself with it beneath three decades' unstirred dust. By reviving through Guy's letters the immediate real-

ity of the past, she forces Lilia and Antonia to air their long-submerged illusion and so to recognize its deficiencies in the light of present day.

The laying of Guy's ghost, symbolically expressed by Big Ben's demolishing strokes followed by refreshing rain, has a positive effect on all of those concerned. Once Antonia has accepted Guy's irrevocable death and the waste of her own life, lived as though he were immortal, she is able to confront what may be left of the future. Once Lilia has acknowledged that her ingrown worship of the dead has negated any happiness she might have found in marriage, she can begin to bridge the gulf between her husband and herself. But most positive of all is the effect on Jane. No sooner is she freed of her imaginary romance than she is ready to form a realistic attachment. Her opportune discovery of a genuine, living love presents explicitly at the novel's close what has been implicit from the beginning: that love, when it is rooted in the possible world, is, now as ever, our greatest good.

In contrast to the preceding novels, *A World of Love* is optimistic, and as such marks an alteration in Miss Bowen's outlook as a novelist. Whereas in the past her books stressed the tragedy of an age that destroys love, home, and security, her latest expresses the hope that these values can be revived. Now, when humanity hangs in the balance between salvation and annihilation, she has chosen to emphasize directly those aspects of life that make it worth saving. At the same time, the principal themes of her most recent novel are essentially what they have been from the beginning of her career. Here as before we find the same warning against our romantic afflictions: love founded on impossible fantasy, nostalgia for the past, and the basic quest for self-fulfillment in the realms of the unreal. Once again we feel her conviction that the forces that make and break the world have their source in the private individual and the use he makes of love.

Round Table

THE WRITING LABORATORY AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY

STANTON MILLET AND JAMES L. MORTON

In an informative article in *College English* in 1950, Robert H. Moore presented the results of a survey of writing clinics and laboratories at forty-nine colleges and universities. Defining the terms, he pointed out that while writing *clinics* usually give individual remedial assistance, writing *laboratories*, more economically, work with groups of students. Both clinic and laboratory, however, although they may offer some help to students who come voluntarily, are primarily parts of the remedial program. They work with those students who fail to attain certain standards of proficiency and who are compelled to attend. This view of the function of the writing clinic is substantiated by articles on clinics at Wayne (*Higher Education*, 1950) and at Iowa State (*School and Society*, 1943, 1952).

Indiana University's Writing Laboratory, established in 1954, has a different purpose. Instead of compulsory remedial work for the poorest students, it offers informal supplementary help for the great middle class of composition students, those who are doing only average work and want to improve. Of the four instructors on the staff of the Laboratory, two are on duty in a large room in the English building every afternoon and evening, Monday through Thursday. While we refuse to spoon-feed students and carefully avoid merely correcting papers before the regular instructor sees them, we are prepared to offer advice on any writing problems with which the student is having difficulty.

The most obvious way in which such a program can supplement the regular composition courses is in overcoming the serious time lag between the writing and correction of a theme. Too often, by the time a student receives his corrected essay from his instructor he has forgotten the questions that arose at the time of writing. More important, he no longer cares about the answers to those questions. Depressing

though it may be, for many students the grade is the single great incentive to writing well. Once the grade is assigned, interest in the theme and in the instructor's marginal comments drops alarmingly. As a result, the student gets help where he can before he turns in his work for grading, and the most important phase of the entire composition course, the actual writing, is supervised not by the instructor but by fraternity scholarship chairmen, roommates, or chance passers-by whose help is often worse than useless. The Writing Laboratory substitutes professional for amateur help, and since the student's motivation is at its highest when he is writing his paper, the teaching is effective.

A second and more important way in which the Laboratory can supplement the regular instruction is in dealing with problems of content and organization. Oddly enough, these, and not problems of grammar or mechanics, are the most disturbing to the average student. In an effort to learn something about their writing habits and the problems which give them most difficulty, we surveyed 849 students in the entire Indiana University composition program, including the three semesters of the regular course, the remedial course for weak students, and the courses for superior students. Among other things, we asked what problem of a list of six the students found most difficult. The list included finding enough to say, organizing the material, writing good paragraphs, writing clear, correct sentences, finding the correct words, and mechanics. As one might expect, the answers varied according to the students' progress in the writing program and success in composition. The remedial students were most concerned with mechanics—one-third found it their greatest problem—although finding enough to say was second in importance, with one-fourth of the remedial students citing it. As they advanced in the regular

three-semester course, finding enough to say became less difficult: 34% of the first semester, 28% of the second semester, and 19% of the third semester students thought it most serious. At the same time, the superior students had enough to say, but thought that diction was the most troublesome. Even with these differences according to level of proficiency, however, finding enough to say and organizing the material remained the most serious problems, as one can see from the combined percentages for all students answering the questionnaire: finding enough to say, 28%; organizing the material, 21%; writing good paragraphs, 10%; writing good sentences, 14%; finding the correct words, 14%; mechanics, 13%. If we consider the first two categories as one problem of structure, we see that an impressive 49% of the students, regardless of their level of proficiency, state it as their most serious difficulty.

At the same time, an analysis of students' writing habits showed that they were not approaching the problem in the right way. On an average 300-500-word theme, more than 50% said they spent more than three hours, and another 25% spent five hours or more. Yet this time was poorly budgeted: two-thirds of the students spent less than twenty minutes thinking about what to say and arranging their ideas in a logical sequence. Instead of planning their arguments, they were leaping right into the rough draft stage, laboriously putting down thoughts as they came, and resting all their hopes for success on careful correction of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Actually, 33% of the students were spending fifteen minutes to an hour, and another 17% were spending more than an hour in painstaking correction of themes essentially weak in content. The great majority (80%) went even farther and had someone else check their work. No wonder they grew discouraged when the work was only fair!

In the classroom, it is extremely difficult to deal effectively with the problem of structure. Perhaps the organization of someone else's essay, analyzed on the blackboard, appears too vague and intangible to be worth trying to understand. The student is con-

cerned with his own essay, not Hazlitt's or Huxley's, and he fails to see how he can apply their methods to his own material. Nor can the student get much help from his instructor in finding enough to say, in seeing the possibilities of an assignment, until after his paper has been graded. In the Writing Laboratory, however, it is possible to make suggestions, have the student follow those suggestions, and check on the effectiveness of the revision—all before a grade has been assigned and hence while the student's interest is high. By giving advice on planning, we are able to help in two important ways. First, we can give the kind of help the students themselves feel they need most; second, we can offer the kind of help the instructors can not give in the classroom and scarcely have time to give in conferences.

As we had hoped, sound planning and careful outlining reduced problems in other phases of writing. Paragraphing, for example, could be handled on the same structural basis. Once the student had an idea to present in his paragraph, we could show him that complete explanations and definitions of terms were essential, that examples and analogies could be used for clarity and interest. When he fully understood what he wanted to say, and had developed his ideas fully in outline, clearer sentences with adequate transitions were the result. Finally, even the choice of the correct word seemed to be easier.

Because of the informal nature of the Writing Laboratory, it is difficult to evaluate it objectively. Most of the instructors, however, feel that it is a valuable supplement to their classroom teaching, and the students themselves are enthusiastic. Attendance has steadily increased from an average of 45 per week during the first year to an average of 70 per week this year. It has been important, we believe, in building what businessmen call goodwill toward the English department, it has helped many students to overcome the terrible sense of frustration that comes from not being able to get ideas down on paper, and it has even stimulated some students to a real effort to write well.

TEACHING A NOVEL TO IMPROVE WRITING MECHANICS

HELMUT W. BONHEIM

Three cheers for Professor Randall Stewart's article in the October 1955 issue of *College English*, in which he suggests that the kind of work now standard in many composition courses be replaced by the reading of great literature!

Unfortunately, the limited schedules to which most composition programs are subject may make us feel guilty about teaching literature as long as our students cannot tell a comma from a semicolon. Of course we want a "current of ideas," and we would rather teach Dickens than the semicolon or three ways to construct a two-family igloo. But most of us do not have a year's course available to us, as Professor Stewart does; we cannot give our students nine books to read, and we may fear that by tackling even a single full-length book we will not be able to keep our students' writing problems from getting lost in the scuffle.

Yet I would like to argue that basic composition skills can be taught by means of literature, that even one good book may be preferable to most anthologies, and that Professor Stewart's idea is applicable to a fairly restricted and conventional course.

To find out how the composition skills of a freshman would be affected by reading a book under careful supervision, I arranged a modest study involving four sections of English composition. Fortunately all our freshmen take the Cooperative English Test before instruction begins, and the scores predict actual performance in composition remarkably well. It seemed only necessary to give these tests again at the end of the term to see what improvement had occurred.

The students in my sections were given a standardized organization and outlining test at the beginning of the quarter to supplement the data yielded by the normal placement test. For comparison the same tests were given to about fifty students taught by an instructor generally acknowledged to be unusually competent and effective. The students in these sections had classroom training in organization, paragraphing and sentence structure, were required to submit outlines with their themes, and in general followed the routine of the conventional beginning composition course.

In addition they discussed essays from the required anthology.

My two sections received no classroom instruction, drill or home assignments related to usage, grammar, organization or the mechanics of composition. Instead, students read Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Papers and examinations were devoted to the problems which arose in connection with reading this book, and class discussion was centered on related matters: characterization, leading themes, social and political background, and so forth, as outlined in a mimeographed study guide prepared for the purpose. Grammatical and mechanical problems were not dealt with in class, nor were assignments made in these areas of basic composition skills. But, as in the control group, themes were marked with symbols and section numbers from the handbook required as a text for the course.

During the last days of the quarter the tests were given again. The control group improved from an average of 81.1 to 88.6 out of a possible 135 points, that is, 7.5 points. The experimental group, on the other hand, rose from 75.6 to 91.8, a gain of 16.2 points. That is, the experimental group advanced twice as much as the control group. And these average scores do not reflect the influence of a few extremely high or low scores: although some students in each group actually did more poorly the second time, approximately half of each group achieved the average improvement of that group or better. On the organization test the control group showed no improvement at all. But the sections which had read the novel, whose score in this case too was somewhat lower at the first testing, surpassed the control group and improved by 57% over the first administration.

Neither instructor had ever seen the placement test, and certainly neither instructor made any attempt to train students specifically for these tests; the tests were strictly timed; as a precautionary measure students were not told whether their scores would affect the course grade or not, and they did not know that they would be taking these tests twice. The experimental sections were not told that they were involved in an experiment. Tests were chosen which

had been professionally constructed, used nationally, and which appeared to test what they claimed to test. Previous experience on a large scale had shown that they could be readministered with valid results.

But the significance of a study like this is not easy to assess.

(1) *Some teachers feel that the important values of an introductory English course cannot be measured by an objective test.* Of course we all wish to teach a number of things in freshman composition which are not subject to objective testing—critical acuity, love of truth, respect for learning, self-knowledge, good taste, and so forth. But surely a discussion of Joe Gargery's natural virtues is not inferior to the rules for punctuating non-restrictive clauses as a vehicle for conveying these imponderables, and our experiment need not concern itself with such non-quantifiable qualities.

(2) *Do the scores achieved in a test which attempts to measure a skill, like punctuation, actually indicate the degree of that skill as it will be shown in classroom work in English, and as it will be shown in other courses which the student will take after he is out of our hands?* It would seem that scores on objective tests can measure such skill. Placement into remedial, normal, or advanced courses according to scores on some of these tests has proven very satisfactory. This indicates that scores on these tests do in actuality correlate closely with what most instructors demand of their students in reading and writing.

The problem of measuring the permanence of a course's effect is more difficult. We might suggest, however, that point for point the gain of the experimental group means more permanent a gain than that of the control group. For the experimental group took the second test with far less of the specific sort of training which is more quickly forgotten—this improvement of 16 points surely indicates an increased sense of

the fundamentals of effective expression, a sense gained from composing themes by a process of selecting from rather than padding out material, from trying to convey ideas to fellow-students equally expert on this one subject, and from the need to express original insights and ideas which seem worth communicating.

(3) *Can basic composition skills be taught to below average as well as average freshmen through the use of literature?* Surprisingly enough, the students in the experimental group who showed the lowest scores on the placement test were to a large extent the ones who later showed the greatest improvement in basic composition skills. It seems likely that these students in particular would have been difficult to instruct successfully by more conventional methods, against which they have developed a tough shell of resistance over a period of years. As a matter of fact, on all the original tests the students in the experimental sections registered a lower average than did those in the experimental group, in spite of which they managed at the end of the term to record higher average scores than their initially more competent brethren, and to write papers giving evidence of this improvement.

Perhaps we cannot say conclusively, especially from such a small sampling, that giving a freshman a single book to read and talk about will teach him how to use commas more effectively than teaching him directly how to use commas. Certainly the careful grading of papers must have contributed to the improvement evident in both control and experimental groups. But it is highly suggestive that a course which tried to teach the value of careful and thoughtful reading, and which students thoroughly enjoyed and respected, elicited as a by-product a considerably increased skill in the fundamentals of composition.

WAR AND PEACE ON THE SCREEN

FRANK R. SILBAJORIS

Paramount Pictures has chosen to present Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* in Vista-Vision and High Fidelity. Insofar as the novel is indeed an all-encompassing vista of life, the producers' intention to transfer

it to the screen with whatever high fidelity can be achieved in a film is most praiseworthy. The film undoubtedly has its merits as entertainment. It is a gripping story of love and adventure; it lasts for three and

a half hours and seems short; it is full of sound and fury and, alas, it signifies nothing. At the end of the film, the spectator, having had an exciting time, must unfortunately ask himself: Why Tolstoy? If the film aims at nothing more than good entertainment and box-office success, why take the trouble to mutilate a great work of art? It may well be true that there is too much technical perfection in the films today, and the moviemakers are too heavily loaded with skill and experience to be able to do much profound, dangerous creative thinking. Perhaps, also, the financial risk involved in the making of a supercolossal film enterprise leaves no margin for error. And so, the moviemakers (with regret, one hopes) prefer to be wrong about the interpretation of a particular work of art they are reproducing on the screen just so long as they are right in what they think the public will like. In any case, the student of literature who has been frequenting movie theaters hoping for the one screen masterpiece as alive as its literary source is again disappointed: Tolstoy has been dissolved in technicolor, and most of the film's attempts to keep faith with the greatness of the original have ended in failure.

The very fact that there were such attempts is already a credit to the producers of this film. They had the courage, for instance, to let Prince Andrey Bolkonsky die without having married Natasha, although their love story so completely dominates the events on the screen that it might have been easier to forget about the intricate profundities of Tolstoy's thought and let Pierre die instead. Pierre, as he appears in the film, deprived of his soul-shattering search for truth and meaning in life, stumbles along merely getting in everybody's way. To be sure, the script writer, again trying not to be entirely unfair to Tolstoy, allows Pierre to express at the beginning something of his dilemma by making him say, in effect, that he does not know who he is and that he wants to discover "everything." As the action proceeds, Pierre, obedient to the directions of the script, breaks pieces of crockery, bumps against door frames, watches men die, suffers from cold and fatigue, and at the end says to Natasha: "What I've learned is simple—we are born to be happy, we are

born to endure, to accept, to love God." This may or may not be a fair approximation to Tolstoy's: "... he had come to see that the God in Karatayev was grander, more infinite, and more unfathomable than the architect of the Universe recognized by the Masons. He felt like a man who finds what he has sought at his feet, when he has been straining his eyes to seek it in the distance." The real difference is that we find it impossible to believe Henry Fonda's version of Pierre, because nothing significant has happened inside him.

The entire episode of Pierre's Masonic infatuations is omitted from the film, but this may be justified by the lack of time. However, the encounter with Platon Karatayev is a total failure in the screen version. It is strange that this should be so, since it was just as easy to borrow from Tolstoy those aspects of Platon's personality which reveal his true instinctive feeling of unity with God through simplicity and love as to turn him into a rather foolish Russian peasant who can lay himself down to sleep after witnessing an execution merely because he is too primitive to comprehend the significance of the event. Incidentally, in the novel Platon does *not* stand next to Pierre during the shooting of the Moscow incendiaries, and one may surmise that the script writer sought to establish a sharper contrast between Pierre's moral shock and the peasant's "Christian acceptance" by his use of the device of bringing them together at the scene of death. However, the spectator finds it hard to forgive Platon's cheerful countenance so soon after the bloody spectacle, and thus, with one stroke, the whole meaning of his existence in the story is destroyed.

There is no doubt why Prince Andrey appears in the film: he is Natasha's lover. He also lets it be known that on the whole he has a pretty sour opinion of the world. However, Andrey never makes it clear why. Surely, the fact that he is bored with his wife and the company she keeps is not enough to make as complex a person as Tolstoy's Andrey so bitter about everything. There is no hint in the film that Andrey might be engaged in an equally bitter struggle for meaning in life as Pierre is, and that this is, in fact, what makes them friends, brothers in spirit. If Pierre

began by believing too boyishly in the nobility of men who had set themselves up as living symbols of the ideals the French Revolution was fought for, Andrey, who had heard entirely too much clever ball-room conversation about ideas and ideals, began by coldly rejecting any suggestion that the chattering crowds around him might be capable of human greatness. Pierre could not help believing—he was such a good-hearted young fellow—his problem was that of finding the right way to the God he knew existed. That way was pointed to him by Platon Karatayev after Pierre had been prepared to understand it by long series of defeats caused by his all-too-eager striving to change the face of the earth so that it would resemble that of God. Andrey's denial of any forms of sham, on the other hand, had prepared him to relinquish the imagined importance of individual will, courage, and intellect at the supreme moment of his life when he lay wounded under the clear Austerlitz sky. In the film we look in vain for Andrey's crucial discovery at Austerlitz, or for any equivalent of it. As it was with Pierre, we cannot believe Andrey's declarations to the effect that he has learned his lesson, because all he does in the film, when he is not being in love with Natasha, is to walk around haughtily and angrily, hating things.

Natasha, in fact, is presented in the film not only as the main female character but as *the* main character in the whole story. As portrayed by Audrey Hepburn, she is enchanting, and might indeed have brought joy to old Tolstoy's own heart. She seems to be the only truly alive person in the whole cast, conveying the charm and animal vitality of the novel's heroine. As a young girl, she is absurd and lovely and infinitely surprised at the exciting experience of love and at the unfolding of the beautiful world all around her. But at the end, when she walks arm in arm with Pierre in a flowering garden (she does *not* wash diapers in the film), she hasn't grown up. The movie Natasha does not become a woman—her final acceptance of Pierre seems like just another temporary fling. There are beautiful closeups of Natasha's sorrowful face when she mourns Andrey's suffering and death, but these are not

enough to convince us that she has understood, even instinctively, anything that has happened to either of them. Upon the return of the Rostovs to Moscow, after the Napoleonic plague has burned itself out, she is the first to begin picking up the scattered shambles of their former idyllic existence, but one is inclined to attribute this to her overabundance of vitality that wouldn't stay put down rather than to any emergence of maturity in her. Her short infatuation with Anatoly Kuragin also leaves the final impression of an unfortunate mistake, both on her part and on that of the script writer. In the novel, Natasha's head is turned by the handsome rake because she is hungry for love and because she has not yet learned to recognize that not all the beauty in this world is born of goodness. In the film, she follows Kuragin for no reason at all, except perhaps that she feels peevish about Andrey's jilting her.

This careful tiptoeing around all the really important issues of the novel is perhaps the main reason for the failure of the film to become a work of art possessing at least some intimations of greatness. One may argue that the film industry is free to confine itself within the limits of fairly entertaining mediocrity if it so wishes. However, the choice of Tolstoy's novel to be presented on the screen brings with it the responsibility of at least attempting to comprehend something of his achievement as an artist. The producers of the film apparently decided that such an undertaking would be too difficult for them. Instead of grappling with Tolstoy's genius, they preferred to summarize some of his most prominent ideas in a few lines put in the appropriate characters' mouths. So with Kutuzov—in the film he substitutes for Tolstoy's chapters dealing with the laws of history and with the accumulated consequences of small events as opposed to the "deeds of great men." The movie Kutuzov is a sort of sleepy, crafty peasant prophet who already knows everything the first time he appears on the screen. He is so preoccupied with predicting the outcome of battles and with growling at his generals that he has no time left to be the warm and simple human being created by Tolstoy. Triumphant generals are often sorely

tempted to indulge in grandiloquent platitudes, and the film producers duly supply Kutuzov with some at the moment of his victory, which in the film comes immediately after the battle of Berezina. In the novel, Kutuzov utters them, too, but immediately afterwards, the true man in him breaks through the general's shell:

... And all at once his face and expression changed: it was not the commander-in-chief speaking now, but a simple, aged man, who plainly wanted to say something most important to his comrades.

"And now, brothers . . . We will see our visitors off and then we will rest. . . . It's hard for you, but still you are at home; while they—you see what they have come to," he said, pointing to the prisoners. "Worse than the lowest beggars. While they were strong, we did not spare ourselves, but now we can even spare them. They, too, are men. Eh, lads? . . ."

"But after all is said and done, who asked them to come here? It serves them right, the b——b——" he said suddenly lifting his head. And swinging his riding-whip he rode off at a gallop, accompanied for the first time during the whole campaign by gleeful guffaws and roars of hurrah from the men as they moved out of rank.

The makers of this film chose to cut out the passages best characterizing the generosity and the impulsive though thoroughly human anger of the man.

No one is under obligation to accept Tolstoy's view on the laws of history, but when Tolstoy translates his philosophical ideas into the experiences, thoughts, and emotions of the people who are the witnesses and participants of this epoch making war against Napoleon, he makes every reader a helpless prisoner of his art. Intellectually, we may or may not agree with the main theses of the book, but every single individual experience of Tolstoy's living men is such a compelling insight and discovery to the reader that he cannot help but say: this is truth, this is what I have always known somewhere deep inside me but have been unable to either articulate or define. It is the human beings in the novel that give to it most of its value as a great work of literature. United into a coherent whole by the unforeseeable consequences of their irrevocable actions, they form a single living organism. They often seem helpless to influence the awesome

course of events, and yet, this apparently blind force which picks them up like so many loose leaves in the wind is actually the sum total of their own conscious and unconscious experiences. This is why Tolstoy's ordinary people, whose instincts are in harmony with this all-pervading life-force, can do extraordinary things under pressure of circumstances, suddenly revealing their true organic greatness, and then folding themselves in again to assume their usual humble personalities. This does not happen in the film. The characters there are fragmentary, their emotions conventionalized and artificial, and not one single person is inevitably necessary to the story.

War and Peace is, after all, a very long book, and the producers of the film may legitimately argue that the most a visual medium can do is to select the more spectacular and memorable episodes and to organize them in such a way that both the basic story and the intellectual implications of the book would at least partially come through. However, even where the art of film has an advantage over the printed page—in its ability to make visible the most significant single moments of human experience—this particular film again disappoints its audience. Curiously enough, Tolstoy, being an exquisite painter of small scenes pregnant with meaning, provides any script writer with innumerable opportunities to recreate the full impact of the novelist's art. There is, for instance, the unforgettable episode in the country estate of the Rostovs where Natasha, having never known how to do a Russian folk dance, glides into it with an effortless grace, with unconscious knowledge of her Russian heritage:

She danced the dance well, so well indeed, so perfectly, that Anisya Fyodorovna, who handed her at once the kerchief she needed in the dance, had tears in her eyes, though she laughed as she watched that slender, graceful little countess, reared in silk and velvet, belonging to another world than hers, who was yet able to understand all that was in Anisya and her father and her mother and her aunt and every Russian soul.

Even if all the rest of Tolstoy's efforts to portray the character of Natasha and to make clear her significance in the book had been a dismal failure, we would still be able to feel his purpose from this single

magnificent scene. In the film, Natasha is only shown dancing in the ballroom, and, charming as she is, we are given to see only what is actually the lesser half of her.

The same kind of failure is evident in the battle scenes. In the film they are magnificent, but the fear and strange joy of men facing and dealing death, so vividly recreated by Tolstoy, are missing. What we see instead are horses, men, trumpets, cannon, and a mass of nameless uniformed beings cut down by cavalymen's swords or grapeshot, like so many cardboard figures. Not a single soldier from either army is granted a living personality, although even the most episodic characters in the novel are transformed by Tolstoy's magic wand into self-sustaining human personalities capable of any amount of development. One remembers the humble little Captain Tushin, a most unprepossessing man, who in the exhilaration of battle quite forgets (if it ever occurs to him) that he is accomplishing a heroic deed. Neither can one forget the "pale, frightened faces" of the French soldiers executing the Moscow incendiaries, who understand, as does Pierre who sees them, that there is something terrible happening *to them*, and not they that are doing something terrible to their fellow human beings. Thus, the execution scene in the film, even though quite chilling by any standards, lacks the peculiar stamp of Tolstoy's mind. There is nothing in it to make it differ essentially from any other visual depiction of violent death—for example, the hanging of some horse thieves in a Western movie. There is one shot in the film expressing the preposterous meaninglessness of war so well that it comes to the viewer as a surprise: Pierre's hand dropping the poppy flower just as the first cannon of Borodino crashes through the quiet of the summer day. One then wonders why, with all the sweeping battle panoramas, no place was found in the film to show the red-haired Russian artilleryman engaged in a tug-of-war with a French soldier over

a gun-mop. The "distracted and at the same time exasperated expressions of the two men who were obviously quite unconscious of what they were doing" would have made the audience feel what Tolstoy tried to say about war all the more effectively.

The film *War and Peace* presents a magnificent spectacle. In some ways it cannot help being good entertainment because of the very enormity of the events it is portraying and because of the skill of the technicolor camera, even though it is focused on superficialities. In other ways it does provide a hint of Tolstoy's ideas, however much telescoped into declarative statements by the main characters. It also manages to stick to the main thread of the plot, in spite of the fact that various rearrangements and the inadequacy of the characters leave a multitude of loose ends and unanswered questions floating in the air.

But the most one can say for the film is that it is able to convince the spectator that Tolstoy must indeed have been a great writer if even such a shadowy reflection of his novel can be so overwhelming. This is perhaps why it should be seen by at least those students majoring in science or liberal arts, who, afraid of Tolstoy's ponderous thoughts, consign his books to that peculiar cemetery of human achievement known as "great works of art." The film whets the appetite for the book. This is its achievement. In most other respects, it fails. Tolstoy, whose mind was of large dimensions, recorded his insight that life is good in an epic sweep of events swarming over the everyday existence of ordinary people who grow to greatness as they become aware of their personal insignificance. On the outside screen, celebrated actors appear much larger than life only to remain mere technicolored shadows. The book has achieved immortal fame. The film may succeed in becoming, for a little while, the talk of the town.

Current English Forum

CONDUCTED BY THE NCTE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT ENGLISH USAGE

MARGARET M. BRYANT, *Chairman*

THE LANGUAGE OF THE CULTIVATED

AUSTIN C. DOBBINS

In virtually all modern handbooks of composition, students are advised to confine their language choices in college themes to usages which are appropriate to the writing of cultivated people. The use of colloquialisms is to be avoided. Slang—dread thought—is perhaps better rejected entirely. More appropriately, college themes are to be clothed in language which is appropriate to “the highest level of usage and style” which students are capable of writing.

How is the student to follow this frequently expressed advice of his elders? To what authority is he to turn to determine which terms are or are not suitable to the highest level of usage and style which he is capable of writing? Perhaps study of the statements regarding usage in the handbooks will enable the student to achieve the desired standard. Unfortunately, unless he decides to accept the pronouncements of one particular text, the student who follows this suggestion faces difficulties. To Hodges (*Harbrace Handbook*, 1951) *ugly* (ill-tempered) is a colloquialism. To Marckwardt (*Scribner Handbook*, 1948), however, employment of *ugly* in this sense is clearly sanctioned by literary use. To fix (to repair), according to McCrimmon (*Writing with a Purpose*, 1950), is a term which is inappropriate in formal style. Warfel (*American College English*, 1949) considers this a usage acceptable in all but the most formal writing. Kierzek (*Macmillan Handbook*, 1954) asserts that *complected* should not be used in any level of writing. Leggett (*Prentice-Hall Handbook*, 1954) suggests instead that *complected* is acceptable as a colloquialism. Foerster (*Writing and Thinking*, 1952) labels “to feature” (to give special prominence to) as colloquial or as business jargon. Gorrell (*Modern Eng-*

lish Handbook, 1953) states rather that while overused the term is becoming established usage. The list might well be extended. Considerable disagreement exists regarding the status of such words as *bunch*, *claim*, *contact*, *date*, *farther*, *humans*, *lend*, *mad*, *nice*, and *tough*.

If the dictionary, which “records the [actual] usage of the speakers and writers of our language,” is accepted as the authority, the result is frequently even greater confusion. For example, the *American College Dictionary* (“the best dictionary the English language has ever had”) terms colloquial such words as *cop*, *gripe*, *holdup*, and *pal*. Webster’s *New Collegiate Dictionary* (“the supreme authority”) labels these words slang.¹ Webster’s in turn, maintains that *guy*, *kids*, *medico*, and *to neck* (words chosen almost at random) are colloquial. The ACD identifies these words as slang. Since both dictionaries claim to base their labels upon usage, the question inevitably arises as to which dictionary should be accepted as the authority.

Admittedly, the words in these lists belong to shifting classifications. In many cases the differences between slang and colloquial usages are more of degree than of kind. But what of such words as *boondoggle*, *corny*, *frisk*, *liquidate*, *pinhead*, *bonehead*, *carpetbagger*, *pleb*, *slush fund*, and *snide*? Which of these words ordinarily would be considered appropriate in themes written by cultivated people? According to the editors of the ACD, the first five of these words are slang; the second five are

¹ The *American College Dictionary* (1953) and Webster’s *New Collegiate Dictionary* (1953) are used primarily for convenience in reference. Similar disagreement may be found if the labels in other standard dictionaries are compared.

established usage. To the editors of *WNCD*, the first five of these words represent established usage; the second five are slang. Which authority is the student to follow?

Since the pronouncements both of handbooks and of dictionaries prove confusing, perhaps the use of "common sense" on the part of the instructor may resolve disagreement into agreement? But this suggestion also raises difficulties. The instructor is asked to comment upon the level of language found in the following "specimens" of college writing. Should the italicized words in these selections be considered appropriate or inappropriate to the writing of cultivated people?

The *highbinders* took care properly to *grease the palms* of the police. They hired *shysters* who didn't give a *tinker's damn* for law or justice. And, although the other Mongoloids soon became *sick* of the obvious connections between *honky-tonk* and law, honest citizens of all races continued to be *turned down* at the city hall so long as bribery remained unchecked. *Yellow* though the crooks were said to be, no crook was found willing to *spill* enough information to keep the town from being known as a *push-over* for criminal elements.

Flophouse habitués, wrinkled and wary, *skewed* eyed delinquents with *smokes* dangling loosely from their lips, old men *shaky* from *bootleg* and lack of soda—one and all made *snide* remarks as they listened to the ancient *wheezes* of Rev. Sam. "*Bonehead*" was the least of the taunts they used. But Sam was set in his ways. He paid no attention to their *lip*.

What is the instructor to answer? If he objects to the italicized words, he may be asked to show cause and authority for his objection. If he tries to defend the use of words of this nature by suggesting that levels of language vary in accordance with the demands of speaker, subject, and audience (the doctrine of appropriateness), he may be referred to particular authorities who maintain that "careful writers avoid this usage" in cultivated writing. Then,

after laboriously consulting the various authorities, if he is conscientious, the instructor will discover that the authorities disagree. The *ACD* classifies the italicized words in the first selection as slang (the type of language which usually is to be avoided in college compositions). *WNCD* regards each of these terms as established usage. The *ACD* considers the italicized words in the second selection as established. *WNCD* labels these terms as a mixture of dialect and slang.

Certain words are deemed inappropriate in college compositions. How is the student to recognize these terms which are inappropriate to the highest level of usage and style—inappropriate to the writing of cultivated people? Perhaps the answer is to advise students to study only one handbook, consult one dictionary, listen to one instructor. An alternate suggestion, of course, is for our textbooks more accurately to base their labels upon studies of usage.

Q. Will you explain when to use *slow* and when to use *slowly*?

A. In Old English adverbs were formed in two ways: by adding—*lic*, which developed into—*ly*; by adding—*e*, which later dropped off. *Slow* and *slowly* are the two forms of the adverb which have come down to us. They have been used in English literature throughout the centuries and are recognized by all respectable dictionaries as adverbs. The cadence of the sentence determines which form will be employed. Observe the use of both forms in one poetic line from Clough: "In front the sun climbs *slow*, how *slowly*." We generally say "Drive *slow*" but "The man walked *slowly* down the road." Use whichever form is more euphonious in the sentence. The shorter form is usually more vigorous and generally employed in imperative sentences, whereas in declarative sentences the longer form is more common. (M.M.B.)

Councilletter

THE ST. LOUIS CONVENTION: FRIDAY PROGRAM

The 1956 Convention will look a good bit towards a professional heaven but will also keep its feet on the ground—though we hope no more than one lively foot at a time.

Among the speakers and other participants at the general opening session on Thursday night, and at the banquet and luncheon meetings on Friday and Saturday, will be Harold Taylor, President of Sarah Lawrence College; Mrs. Luella B. Cook, President of NCTE; Thomas B. Sherman, dramatic critic of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*; Wallace Stegner, Stanford University; and Thomas Hall, Washington University.

One of the convention features will be the official delivery to the Council of the long-awaited Volume III in the Curriculum Series, *The English Language Arts in the Secondary School*. Another will be the presentation of a scroll to NCTE by the American Shakespeare Theater and Academy.

In the spirit of the convention theme selected by President Cook, the group meetings on Friday are intended (1) to suggest, propose, and clarify values and goals in the English program in all levels, (2) to explore some of these values and goals in specific areas, and (3) to present some methods of reaching towards and arriving at these values or goals. The program therefore should present the results of our experience and of our techniques, but it is especially intended to inquire into the values on which we may and presumably do base our practices and techniques, and, if possible, to set those values high enough to challenge both student and teacher.

Thus, we will give considerable attention to not only the present but also the future of the student—and of the teacher: the student's lifetime reading habits, the high school writing program for general and specialized needs, the professional training of the teacher, and literary scholarship and the teaching of literature.

The Friday program will look at some

old and new problems. It will be varied enough, we hope, to please many, proceeding as it does *from* the special nature of literature as communication and the need for better communication between all of us responsible for the teaching of English and the teaching of the teaching of English to the teaching of literature as art, new trends in high school curricula, maintaining and improving professional standards, a writing program for elementary school students (many of these will be coming to college eventually), and a frank but friendly panel at which high school and college teachers will tell each other what's wrong with each other.

Our old friends, the new linguists, will again be with us, but the results of recent applications of linguistics to the teaching of English in the classrooms are likely to make the meetings on linguistics not only as refreshing as always but also of more immediate significance for more of us in our teaching.

The thirty or so meetings should appeal widely to all levels: at least 17 will be of interest to elementary teachers, 25 to high school teachers, and 20 to college teachers. Of these about half are concerned with literature or reading, almost half with writing or speaking, and the rest with the four language arts together or in groups.

Several meetings will be co-sponsored by related educational groups such as The International Reading Association, The Speech Association of America, The National Book Committee of the American Book Publishers Council, and The Association of College and Reference Libraries.

Among the speakers and group leaders there will be many new names and some well-known already to NCTE members, as a glance at the program will show. We hope that the attendance at the convention will be as geographically representative as is the list of our speakers and other participants in the program.

The St. Louis Local Committee, under the co-chairmanship of George D. Stout,

Washington University, and C. Robert Wells, St. Louis Country Day School, is working hard and wisely to make our visit to St. Louis a pleasant one. Your attend-

ance will help make it profitable for us all.

JEROME W. ARCHER
2nd Vice-President

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

SECTION NOMINATING COMMITTEE

An important duty of the members of the various sections of the Council is the selection, at the Annual Meeting, of Section Nominating Committees. Since it is the responsibility of such committees to nominate Council members to fill posts in the Sections caused by expiration of terms or by resignations, the Nominating Committees should be composed of those who have considerable knowledge of the nature of the positions to be filled and of Council members capable of filling them.

For some years, it was customary, at the Saturday morning section meetings, for the chairmen to call for nominations from the

floor. In 1954, in an attempt to improve the procedure of selection, it was agreed that a ballot be prepared previous to the meeting, on which would be placed names of section members recommended by the Section Committees.

At the annual business meeting of the College Section, such a ballot will be distributed. Members of the College Section are invited to make additional nominations from the floor. Spaces on the ballot are provided for such nominations.

T. A. BARNHART

Chairman, College Section

ST. CLOUD (MINN.) S.T.C.

Forty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English

St. Louis, Missouri, 22-24 November, 1956

The headquarters hotel will be the Sheraton-Jefferson. Rooms will also be available at the Statler, three blocks away. Requests for reservations should be sent directly to the hotel of your choice.

Convention theme: Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?

—"Andrea del Sarto," BROWNING

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

(Note: The following program is not complete, and there may be some inaccuracies. Names of many participants are not included. The reason is that copy for the NCTE October magazines is due in August, before all details of the convention can be arranged. Complete and corrected programs will be given registrants at the convention, or may be obtained about 1 November from NCTE, 704 South Sixth St., Champaign, Illinois.)

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY 19-21 NOVEMBER

Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9:30 A.M.—10:00 P.M. Monday and Tuesday; 9:30 A.M.—5:00 P.M. Wednesday.

WEDNESDAY 21 NOVEMBER

Meeting of the Commission on the English Curriculum, 9:30 A.M.—10:00 P.M.

COLLEGE ENGLISH

THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER

Exhibit of Textbooks and Other Aids for Teaching (continues until Saturday noon)

Registration, 8:00 A.M.—10:00 P.M.

Meeting of the Board of Directors, 9:00 A.M.—12:00 M. (*All members of the Council are invited to attend as auditors.*)

Luncheon and Working Sessions of Council Committees, as arranged by their chairmen, 12:15 P.M.—3:00 P.M.

Meeting of CCC Executive Committee, 12:15 P.M.—3:00 P.M.

Annual Business Meeting, 3:30 P.M.—4:30 P.M. (*All members of the Council are eligible to participate.*)

GENERAL SESSION, 8:00 P.M.

Presiding: Jerome W. Archer, Marquette University, Second Vice President of the Council

Invocation: Rabbi Ferdinand M. Isserman, Temple Israel, St. Louis

Welcome to St. Louis: Philip J. Hickey, Superintendent of Instruction, St. Louis Public Schools

"Man's Reach Should Exceed His Grasp": Luella B. Cook, President of the Council, formerly with Minneapolis Public Schools

The Aims of Education: Harold S. Taylor, President of Sarah Lawrence College

Presentation to the Council of Volume III, Curriculum Series, *The English Language Arts in the Secondary School*: Angela Broening, Associate Director, Commission on the English Curriculum

Acceptance for the Council: Luella B. Cook, President

RECEPTION

FRIDAY MORNING 23 NOVEMBER

FIRST SERIES—9:00 A.M. to 10:20 A.M.

A Clarification of Our Goals

(At each of the following three meetings, an announcement of Volume III of the Language Arts Series will be presented by, respectively, Max J. Herzberg, Director of Publications; Dora V. Smith, Director, Commission on the English Curriculum; and Angela Broening, Associate Director, Commission on the English Curriculum.)

I. Insights into Communication

Chairman: Rev. M. B. McNamee, S.J., St. Louis University

Speakers: James A. Work, Indiana University, "Literature as Communication"

George R. Waggoner, University of Kansas, "The Need for Better Communication in the Profession"

II. The Importance of the English Program

Chairman: Helen K. Mackintosh, U. S. Office of Education

Speakers: Paul Farmer, Atlanta Public Schools, "Values in Personality and Character Development"

Nick Aaron Ford, Morgan State College (Md.), "Values in Social Development"

III. Some Values in Our Literary Heritage

Chairman: Guy A. Cardwell, Washington University

Speakers: John L. Gerber, State University of Iowa, "Mark Twain"

Frederick E. Faverty, Northwestern University, "The View of an Englishman, Matthew Arnold"

FRIDAY NOON 23 NOVEMBER

SECOND SERIES—10:30 A.M. to 12:00 NOON

Exploration of Specific Problems Confronting Us

IV. Developing Lifetime Reading Habits in the Elementary Schools, Secondary Schools, and Colleges

Speakers: John J. DeBoer, University of Illinois, Editor, *Elementary English*
 Richard S. Alm, University of Hawaii, "The Utmost Need in Our High Schools"
 Bro. Anthony Frederick, S.M., St. Mary's University (Tex.), "Some Ways to High Converse"

V. The Interrelation of the Four Language Arts

Chairman: Harold B. Allen, University of Minnesota

Panel: Ruth G. Strickland, Indiana University, on the Elementary School
 Virginia Alwin, State Teachers College (Flagstaff, Ariz.), on the High School
 Robert Limpus, Western Michigan College, on the College

VI. The Importance of Writing in the English Program

Chairman: Sr. Jane Marie, O.S.B., Benedictine Heights College (Okla.)

Speaker: William R. Steinhoff, University of Michigan, "The Ethical Value of Composition"

Panel: Robert Tuttle, General Motors Institute

VII. The Teaching of Speaking and Listening

Co-sponsored by the Speech Association of America and planned by Donald P. Veith,
 Chico State College (Calif.), Chairman, NCTE-SAA Liaison

Chairman: Donald C. Bryant, Washington University

Speakers:

Carl A. Dallinger, State University of Iowa
 June Lingo, Muscatine High School (Iowa)
 Dorothy Q. Weirich, Webster Grove High School (Iowa)
 Lin Welch, Central Missouri State College

VIII. Communication for Social Competence

Planned by the Committee on All-School Learning

Chairman: Elizabeth Rose, New York University

Participants:

Marjorie Smiley, Hunter College
 Mary Houston Davis, Finch College
 Mary Elizabeth Fowler, State Teachers College (Conn.)
 Arthur Beringhause, Evander Childs High School (New York City)
 Richard McLoughlin, Chelsea Vocational High School (New York City)
 Joseph Mersand, Jamaica High School (N.Y.)
 Milton Finkelstein, High School of Printing Trades (New York City)

IX. The Teaching of Literature as Art

Chairman: Robert C. Pooley, University of Wisconsin

Panel:

Roberta Deason, Austin High School, Houston, Tex.
 Sister Madeleine Sophie, Messmer High School, "The Esthetic Experiencing of the Novel"
 Richard Corbin, Peekskill High School (N.Y.), "The Esthetic Experiencing of a Poem"

X. The Language Arts Curriculum Today

Chairman: Oscar M. Haugh, University of Kansas

Recorder: Lillian C. Paukner, Milwaukee Public Schools

Speakers: Arno Jewett, U. S. Office of Education, "National Trends in High School English Programs"

Elfrieda Shellenberger, Wichita High School East (Kan.), "Revising the Language Arts Curriculum in the Wichita Junior and Senior High Schools"

Helen K. Mackintosh, U. S. Office of Education, "National Trends in Elementary School Language Arts Programs"

*XI. The Contributions of Linguistics to the Teaching of English**XII. The Contribution of Mass Media to the English Program**XIII. The College English Literature Program for the General Student*

Chairman: Brice Harris, Pennsylvania State University

Recorder: Frederick L. Gwynn, University of Virginia

Panel: Glenn J. Christensen, Dean, Lehigh University

XIV. The Value of Comparative Literature

Chairman: Horst Frenz, Indiana University

Speakers: Kenneth Oliver, Occidental College, "Comparative Literature for General Education"

Louise M. Rosenblatt, New York University, "Comparative Literature for Teacher Training"

King Hendricks, Utah State Agricultural College, "Comparative Literature for the Librarian"

XV. Professional Training of the English Teacher

Chairman: Alfred H. Grommon, Stanford University

Speakers: Warner G. Rice, University of Michigan, "The General Education of the Teacher of English"

John R. Searles, University of Wisconsin, "The Professional Education of the Teacher of English"

XVI. Literary Scholarship and the Teaching of Literature

Chairman: Lewis Leary, Columbia University

Speakers:

Merritt Y. Hughes, University of Wisconsin

William Van O'Connor, University of Minnesota

XVII. (Tentative) Evaluation—Principles or Values Which May Form the Basis of Methods and Techniques in Teaching and Evaluating

FRIDAY NOON 23 NOVEMBER

LUNCHEON SESSIONS, 12:15 P.M.

1. *Books for Children: A Luncheon for Librarians and Teachers in Elementary and High Schools*

Chairman: Jennie Wahlert, Washington University

Speaker: Dora V. Smith, University of Minnesota, "Children's Books Around the World"

2. *Conference on College Composition and Communication*

Chairman: Irwin Griggs, Temple University, Chairman of CCCC

Speaker: Thomas B. Sherman, music and dramatic critic, St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*3. *Journalism*

FRIDAY AFTERNOON 23 NOVEMBER

THIRD SERIES—3:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M.

*Identifying Professional Resources and Illustrating Professional Know-How**XVIII. Providing for a Wide Range of Ability in the Elementary and Secondary Schools and Colleges*

Chairman: Priscilla Tyler, Western Reserve University

Speaker: Robert Havighurst, University of Chicago, "Developing Individual Abilities in Mass Education"

- Panel: Myrtle Gustafson, Oakland Public Schools, "The Elementary School"
Gladys Herbkerzman, Shaker Heights Junior High School (Ohio), "Small-Group Techniques"
Richard A. Meade, University of Virginia, "High School Curriculum Organization"
Edwin H. Saver, Walnut Hill School (Cincinnati), "Admission to College with Advanced Standing"
Clarence Derrick, University of Florida, "Discovering Talent in a State University"

XIX. Organization of the High School Program for General and Specialized Writing Needs

- Chairman: Jarvis Bush, Wauwatosa High School (Wis.)
Speaker: George N. Dove, East Tennessee State College
Panel: Sister M. Emmanuel, S.L., DeAndreis High School
Helen F. Olson, Queen Anne High School (Seattle)
Don Parker, Columbia University
Elizabeth Barton, Chilton High School (Canton, Ala.)

XX. Network Television as a Springboard to Children's Reading

Co-sponsored by The International Reading Association

Chairman: Nancy Larrick, President, IRA

- Speakers: Ruth Strang, Columbia University, "Children's Interests as a Dynamic Force in the Teaching of Reading"
Showing of Kinescope of a Well-Known Network Program
Helen Huus, University of Pennsylvania, "How This Program Can Be Used"

XXI. Organization of a Writing Program in the Elementary School

Chairman: Norman H. Naas, Consultant on Instruction, Mt. Diablo School District (Calif.)

Speakers:

- Joan Carey, University of Florida
Hannah Lindahl, Supervisor of Elementary Education, Mishawaka City Schools (Ind.)
Katharine Koch, Mishawaka City Schools (Ind.)
Edna L. Sterling, Director of Language Arts, Seattle Public Schools
Esther Westendorf, Language Arts Coordinator, Wantagh Public Schools (N.Y.)

XXII. How Can We Teach Writing to the Increasing Numbers of Students in the Secondary Schools and Colleges?

XXIII. A Program for the Teaching of Creative Writing in the High Schools and Colleges

XXIV. Constructive Criticism of High School and College Teaching of English

Chairman: Mark Neville, Latin School of Chicago

- Panel: Mary Williams, Kirkwood High School (Mo.)
John T. Muri, Hammond High School (Ind.)
James Mason, Indian Springs School (Ala.)
Robert Christin, Notre Dame University
Neal Cross, Colorado State College of Education
Charles W. Roberts, University of Illinois

XXV. The Librarian, the Professor, and the Reader

Arranged by The Association of College and Reference Libraries and The National Book Committee

Chairman: Margaret W. Dudley, Executive Secretary, National Book Committee
Coordinator: William Ready, Marquette University

XXVI. How to Apply Linguistics to the Teaching of Writing and Speaking at Various Levels

XXVII. How Can We Cooperate with Teachers of English in Foreign Lands?

Planned by the Committee on International Cooperation

Chairman: Strang Lawson, Colgate University

XXVIII. How Can We Maintain and Improve Professional Standards for the Elementary and Secondary School Teacher of English?

Chairman: Donald R. Tuttle, Fenn College

Speakers: John McKiernan, New York State Teachers College (Geneseo), "Desirability of Nation-Wide Certification Standards"

Foster B. Gresham, Longwood College, "Possibility of Regional Cooperation for Improvement of Certification Standards"

Eugene E. Slaughter, Southeastern State College (Okla.), "Organizing Cooperative Efforts within the State: Story of Oklahoma"

Wilfred Eberhart, Ohio State University, "What Does the Beginning Teacher of English Need to Know?"

Henry W. Sams, University of Chicago, "Dangers in the Establishment of Highly Specific Certification Standards"

William J. Dusel, San Jose State College, "Recommended Graduate Training for Advanced Certificates"

XXIX. (Tentative): *Audio-Visual Aids in the Classroom*XXX. (Tentative): *The Use of Folklore in the Classroom*XXXI. (Tentative): *Methods of Evaluation: Tests and Measurements***FRIDAY EVENING 23 NOVEMBER****ANNUAL BANQUET**

Gold Room, Sheraton-Jefferson, 7 P.M.

Presiding: John Gerber, State University of Iowa, past President of NCTE

Invocation: The Reverend Paul C. Reinert, S.J., President of St. Louis University

TWO WAYS OF SPELLING MAN

The Artist's Way: Professor Wallace Stegner, Director, Creative Writing Center, Stanford University

Musical Interlude

The Scientist's Way: Dr. Thomas Hall, Dean, College of Liberal Arts, Washington University

Presentation of Scroll to NCTE by The American Shakespeare Theater and Academy, Stratford, Connecticut

SATURDAY MORNING 24 NOVEMBER**SECTION MEETINGS, 9:00—11:45 A.M.****1. Elementary Section**

Chairman: Alvina Treut Burrows, New York University, Chairman of the Elementary Section

Business Meeting**Reading, A Creative Experience for Children**

Speaker: Ruth G. Strickland, Indiana University, "Children, Reading, and Creativity"

Panel: "Teaching Reading for Richer Creativity"

Muriel Crosby, Wilmington Public Schools

Mabel Altstetter, Miami University (Ohio)

John Ames, Queens College
June Felder, Rivera Public Schools, (Calif.)
Claire Walker, Battle Creek Public Schools

2. Secondary Section

Chairman: Virginia Belle Lowers, Los Angeles Public Schools, Chairman of the Secondary Section
Business Meeting

The English Language Arts in the Secondary School, Volume III in the Council's Curriculum Series—an overview by the chairman of the production committee: Angela Broening, Baltimore Public Schools

Comments on the Council's Book of the Year

Why Should They Write? Agnella Gunn, Boston University

What Should They Write? Lou LaBrant, University of Kansas City

How Should Their Writing Be Judged? William Dusel, San Jose State College

3. College Section

Chairman: T. A. Barnhart, State Teachers College (St. Cloud, Minn.)
Business Meeting

Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading

Presentation: Professor Charles C. Fries, University of Michigan

Response: Dr. William S. Gray, University of Chicago

General Discussion

ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Gold Room, 12:30—3:00 P.M.

Presiding: Luella B. Cook, retiring President of the Council

Invocation: The Reverend C. Oscar Johnson, Pastor, Third Baptist Church, St. Louis

WHO SPEAKS FOR BOOKS?

A Publisher: Hiram Haydn, Chairman of Committee on Reading Development, American Book Publishers Council

An Author: Paul Engle, State University of Iowa

A Reader: Marian Sheridan, James Hillhouse High School (New Haven), past President of the Council

Letters to the Editor

Sir:

I know better than to expect much for thirty-five cents these days, but I wish that your reviewer had included at least one word of disapproval for *Short Cuts to Effective English* by Harry Shefter (*College English*, April 1956).

Although the author raises the flag of liberalism, he soon shows his true colors by recommending forms that are "acceptable all the time." "No one," he says, "can find fault with you for being right."

Mr. Shefter indicates that he wants us to use "It is I" all the time, and under "Serious Errors You Should Avoid" he lists sentences like "A police car arrived ten minutes after we telephoned" and "The first act will end before we get to the theater." "Did one happen first?" he asks. "Yes, the telephoning. Therefore: 'A police car arrived ten minutes after we had telephoned.'" He applies the same reasoning to the little-used and little-needed future perfect tense. What would Mr. Shefter say to a pattern like "He left before he had finished his work"?

As for Mr. Shefter's "ingenious" way of avoiding grammatical terms, are "title" and "statement" easier to understand or remember than "subject" and "predicate"?

CHARLES A. SHAW

Advertising Manager
TEKNI-CRAFT, ROCKTON, ILL.

Sir:

In "Cortez—Not Balboa" in the April issue Professor Wicker leaves Cortez where Keats left him, silent, upon a peak in Darien. If Keats did not make a mistake about Cortez, as Professor Wicker contends, he certainly made a mistake about Darien, which, as Keats could have learned from a map in Robertson's history, is in the southern part of Central America. Cortez never was in Darien; Balboa was—"History requires here Balboa," as Tennyson remarked. Professor Wicker, to sup-

port his reinterpretation, extricates Keats from one error but leaves him stuck fast in another. In fact, Keats, Cortez, and Professor Wicker are all mysteriously silent upon a peak in Darien.

It is unrealistic to contend that Keats is not alluding to the discovery (discovery "as first finding," by white Europeans) of the Pacific in the last four lines of "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." Professor Wicker is also strangely silent about Robertson, while quoting liberally from Gilbert and Wordsworth. The section in Robertson describing the discovery ("as first finding") of the Pacific, without any help from Gilbert and Wordsworth, could have given Keats almost the whole of the image in the last four lines of his sonnet, except perhaps the eagle eyes and the silence ("eagle eyes," by the way, suggests a man looking for something, a potential discoverer, rather than a man merely responding "to the immense sweep of the Pacific").

Here is the pertinent passage:

At length the Indians assured them, that from the top of the next mountain they should discover the ocean which was the object of their wishes. When, with infinite toil, they had climbed up the greater part of that steep ascent, Balboa commanded his men to halt, and advanced alone to the summit, that he might be the first who should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the South Sea stretching in endless prospect below him, he fell on his knees, and lifting up his hands to Heaven, returned thanks to God, who had conducted him to a discovery so beneficial to his country, and so honourable to himself. His followers, observing his transports of joy, rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation and gratitude. (William Robertson, *The History of America*, Vol. I, Fifth Edition, London, 1788, pp. 289-90)

Keats meant Balboa but forgot just in the very crisis he should not, like Don Juan and Haidée.

DOUGALD M. MACEachEN
JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY

Ringing the Changes

INSTRUCTORSHIPS

Charles Beckwith, Cornell University, from Yale University. Robert Brannan, Cornell University. Robert Brustein, Vassar College, from Cornell University. William R. Dickey, Cornell University, from State University of Iowa. Fred Eikel, Centenary College of Louisiana, from University of Baltimore. Edward Emley, Cornell University, from Harpur College. Joseph I. Fradin, Cornell University, from Columbia University. Elliot B. Gosc, Jr., University of British Columbia, from Louisiana State University. Mac Hammond, University of Virginia, from Harvard University. Carl Hartman, Washington University, from Cornell University. Thomas A. McFarland, Jr., University of Virginia, from Oberlin College. David Morrison, DuPont Co., from Cornell University. Bruce Park, Brooklyn College, from Cornell University. W. H. Richter, Cornell University, from Oxford University. Aaron Hood Roberts, Centenary College of Louisiana, from University of Florida. Robert F. White, Cornell University, from University of Pennsylvania.

ASSISTANT PROFESSORSHIPS

Hazard Adams, University of Texas, from Cornell University. Harry Finestone, Women's College of University of North Carolina, from University of Virginia. Warren G. French, Stetson University, from University of Kentucky. Patrick D. Hazard, Trenton (N.J.) State Teachers College, from East Lansing (Mich.) High School. Louis Marder, Kentucky State University, from Pembroke State College. James McConkey, Cornell University, from Morehead State College (Ky.). Charles Murrah, University of Virginia. Stephen Parrish, Cornell University. Jack Teagarden, Centenary College of Louisiana, from University of Florida.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORSHIPS

Jess B. Bessinger, Jr., University of Toronto, from Brown University. Ralph W. Condee, Pennsylvania State University. Walter Harding, Geneseo (N.Y.) State Teachers College, from University of Vir-

ginia. Arthur O. Lewis, Jr., Pennsylvania State University. Joseph P. Lovering, Canisius College, from St. Michael's College (Vt.). David Novarr, Cornell University. Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., University of Virginia, from Harvard University. Gardner B. Taplin, Longwood College, from Boston University. James Wellard, Longwood College, from University of Illinois.

PROFESSORSHIPS

Herschel C. Baker, Harvard University. Walter J. Bate, Harvard University. Edward A. Johnson, St. John's University (N.Y.). Paul N. Siegel, Long Island University, from Ripon College. John R. Willingham, Centenary College of Louisiana.

CHAIRMANSHIPS

Walter J. Bate, Harvard University. Oscar Cargill, New York University Graduate School. Fulton Catlin, Nasson College, from Lynchburg College. Paul N. Siegel, Long Island University, from Ripon College. Floyd Stovall, University of Virginia.

FELLOWSHIPS

Robert M. Adams, Cornell University, (*Hudson Review*). George J. Becker, University of Bordeaux and Lille (Fulbright), from Swarthmore College. B. R. Elliott, Cornell University, from University of Adelaide. George Elliott, Cornell University, (*Hudson Review*). Wilfred Guerin, Tulane University, from Centenary College of Louisiana. Harrison Hayford, University of Florence (Fulbright), from Northwestern University. Earl Labor, University of Wisconsin, from Centenary College of Louisiana.

PRESIDENCY

Paul J. Ketrick, Benedictine Heights College (Okla.), from St. John's University (N.Y.).

RETIREMENTS

Lester M. Beattie, Carnegie Institute of Technology. Nancy Foster, Longwood College.

DEATH

Karl J. Holzknacht, New York University, 24 March 1956.

This department welcomes information (from department heads or individuals) about changes in the status of any college English teacher. Send a postcard to College English, 530 Cabell Hall, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

News and Ideas

THE NINTH SELECTION OF *NEW World Writing* marks the fifth year of its publication and signals an apparent permanency of the series. For this, all readers and teachers will rejoice—especially college English teachers who note in *NWW* the large number of academics budding among Gide, Algren, Vittorini, Ellison, *et al.* Not only does John Ciardi (Rutgers) chose the poets, and Howard Mumford Jones (Harvard) attack *The Great Books of the Western World* in the only extended piece of literary criticism, but much of the poetry itself is written by teachers: John Logan and John F. Nims (Notre Dame), Brewster Ghiselin (Utah), Horace E. Hamilton (Rutgers), Fred Cogswell (New Brunswick), Theodore Weiss (Bard), and Dudley Fitts (Phillips Andover Academy). In fiction there is Clay Putnam (George Washington). The University of Washington takes top billing as matrix for literature in the book, with David Wagoner, R. V. Cassill, William Matchett, Stanley Kunitz, and James Wright all associated with the institution. Incidentally, the most immediately appealing items in *NWW* for teachers are translations of verse—Matchett's of *The Seafarer* and Fitts's of *Marial*. Finally, there are even two stories by undergraduates: Paula Budlong, a senior at Radcliffe, and David A. Ish, a *freshman* at Chicago.

ANOTHER FRESHMAN PROFESSIONAL writer to inspire or scare your classes with is William Wertenbaker, just beginning his sophomore year at Harvard, who has a lovely descriptive piece, "The Last Day of Summer," in the 20 September *New Yorker*. He is the son of the writer Nancy Hale, who is the wife of English Professor Fredson Bowers (University of Virginia).

TEACHERS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE will find useful the mimeographed list (third edition) of inexpensive reprints in the field, made by Walter Harding (Geneseo S.T.C., N.Y.). Send to Robert Falk (UCLA) 50¢ for the list—or \$1 to join

the MLA-AL Group and get the list as well.

PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION is the subject of the whole May issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, the professional education-fraternity journal.

ROBERT FROST'S FANS WILL BE amused and edified by an unusual piece in *Sports Illustrated* for 23 July, in which the poet describes the major league All-Star game. Toward the end, Mr. Frost sets up a code of values that will tempt comparists to place it beside Hemingway's: "Prowess of course comes first, the ability to perform with success in games, in the arts and, come right down to it, in battle. . . . Justice is a close second to prowess. . . . And I mustn't forget courage, for there is neither prowess nor justice without it. . . . My fourth . . . is knowledge, the mere information we can't get too much of . . . before going into action."

ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT OF the attacks on the false values of Herman Wouk's fiction—here the equation of Respectability with Maturity in *Marjorie Morningstar*—is "The Bourgeois and the Bohemian," by Dean Robert E. Fitch (Pacific School of Religion) in the summer *Antioch Review*. There is a righteousness beyond respectability, and an artistic excellence beyond manipulation, according to Fitch—neither of which seems to be available to Wouk's characters.

INTERESTED IN SALARIES? DON'T miss the Final Report of the AAUP committee in the Spring *Bulletin*. The shocking facts are: (1) "... to raise salaries of the present instructional staffs of 27 privately controlled colleges and universities to 1939-40 levels of purchasing power would require an average increase of \$1138, or 17.3 per cent . . ."; (2) "To enable the profession to share in the expanding economy of our society would be a much larger order. . . . Theoretically, what is needed is an increase of 73 percent after bringing

salaries up to the real income level of 1939-40." For purposes of simplification, memory, and argument, we might summarize: *To get back to the purchasing power of 1940 and, in addition, to come up to the appropriate real income level of 1956, college teachers' salaries should be raised an average of 90%. What are you doing about it?*

LIBERAL EDUCATION FOR ENGINEERING students has been steadily rising in prestige in the past few years. The latest release from the American Society for Engineering Education recommends that such professional students spend at least one-fifth of their time in humanities and social sciences—something that only 17% of American institutions now require of them.

THE MOST SYNOPTIC VIEW OF T. S. Eliot's criticism to date is provided by Rene Wellek (Yale), in the July-September *Sewanee Review*. The summary will be a chapter in Wellek's *History of Modern Criticism*, of which the Eighteenth-century and Romantic volumes have been published.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK IS 11-17 November. Observed since 1921, it is "for the purpose of informing the public of the accomplishments and needs of the public schools. . . ."

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE FIRST recommendation of the White House Conference on Education last Spring was that a similar conference on Higher Education be held? Note whether or not the presidential candidates sound this note in any campaign speeches.

THE DEADLINE FOR NOMINATING graduate students as candidates for Woodrow Wilson Fellowship is 15 November. Write Professor Richard C. Boys (Michigan) for information.

THIS SUMMER, TEACHERS AT COLUMBIA received raises of 10% across the board, plus many merit raises, the money coming from the Ford grant and a tuition increase. The pay scale at Columbia is now:

Professor	\$10,000-\$18,000
Associate Professor ...	6,500- 10,000
Assistant Professor ...	5,000- 6,000
Instructor	4,000- 5,000

How does *your* institution compare? Are you still sending students through college by maintaining a lower tuition rate at the expense of *your* lower salary rate?

THE ANNUAL READING INSTITUTE of Temple University will take place 28 January-1 February 1957. Write for information to the Department of Psychology, Philadelphia 22.

IF YOU HAVE WRITTEN OR ARE writing an essay on any phase of American literature, and would like to win \$500 or \$250 plus publication payment, send it by 1 January to the Emily Clark Balch Prize Contest, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, One West Range, Charlottesville, Va.

MAURICE EVANS WILL PUT ON HIS *Man and Superman* for the Hallmark program, NBC-TV, 25 November, 9-10:30 p.m.

THE JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION—which every college teacher and administrator shall follow—prints in its May issue the speeches of Alvin Eurich, Harold Taylor, and Warner Rice (referred to in the May *College English*) on how to handle the Tidal Wave. The issue of *JHE* follows up with an article on "Opportunities in College Teaching" by Dean Clarence E. Ficken of Ohio Wesleyan, which suggests that professors must meet the coming shortage of teachers with (1) "the theory and practice of self-esteem" and (2) "the systematic identification and encouragement of potential college teachers in the present undergraduate student body."

FAULKNER THE MELLOW HUMANIST is manifest in two long interviews with him by women, recently published. One that took place in Paris in 1955 appears in the *American Accent* for Summer 1956, and one that took place in America in 1956 appears in *The Paris Review* for Spring. Faulkner's remarks on *The Sound and the Fury* are most revealing and will prove helpful to students of his work.

New Books

Note: Because of the wide coverage of general books in other periodicals, and because of the large number of special books published in other countries, this department restricts itself—with a few exceptions—to noticing works by American college teachers of English.

Bibliography and Reference

THE VICTORIAN POETS: A GUIDE TO RESEARCH, ed. Frederic E. Faverty (Harvard, 1956, 292 pp., \$5). The reader who feels that he need have nothing except the text for the full enjoyment and understanding of a poem will find this book quite useless. Most of the rest of us will welcome it as an extremely helpful compendium, a worthy companion to *The Romantic Poets: A Review of Research*. Both books came into being as a result of the interests of the Victorian and the Romantic groups of the MLA, who felt the need for guides that would be something more than lists of authors and titles. *The Victorian Poets* begins with a chapter by Jerome Buckley on general materials, and there follow sections on Tennyson, Browning, Mrs. Browning, FitzGerald, Clough (these three in a single chapter), Arnold, Swinburne, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the Later Victorian Poets. Although each part is by a different specialist, the general pattern is much the same (except for the review of the Pre-Raphaelites): Paull F. Baum, for example, opens his summary of Tennyson with a section on bibliography and then takes up editions, biography, and critical studies. It is these surveys of recent critical materials (recent, for the most part, in the sense that they were written during the last twenty or twenty-five years) that make *The Victorian Poets* an extremely useful volume. The reader who

expects to find here full summaries of books and articles will be disappointed, but he who would like to have a convenient guide to modern and recent criticism of Victorian poetry will find this book adequately informative, critically moderate, and pleasantly readable.

THOMAS A. KIRBY

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

AMERICA IN FICTION: AN ANNOTATED LIST OF NOVELS THAT INTERPRET ASPECTS OF LIFE IN THE U. S., Otis W. Coan and Richard G. Lillard, 4th ed. (Stanford, 1956, 200 pp., \$3, paper). A handy and helpful gathering of titles of and comments on novels, under the general headings of the frontier, farm and village life in the five regions, industrial America, politics, religion, and ethnic minorities, with the best book in each group starred. The lists are not exhaustive (the modern war category, for example, seems to lack many titles) and the authors' opinions are often most individual (under the Old South, for instance, Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* appears next to Frances O. Gaither's *Follow the Drinking Gourd*, with the latter starred and praised), but these blemishes are inherent in the project itself, and really only point up the positive value of what these two teachers have done for readers and scholars.

Literary Biography

RUSKIN'S SCOTTISH HERITAGE: A PRELUDE, Helen Gill Viljoen (Illinois, 1956, 284 pp., \$3.75). This volume, though complete in itself, is to be the first in an ambitious full-scale biography of John Ruskin. The publisher's jacket states the

simple fact: this work does indeed mark "a new stage in Ruskin scholarship." Mrs. Viljoen, an associate professor of English at Queens College, has spent several years digging in two continents for new material and thoroughly re-examining and rein-

terpreting known Ruskiniana. For the Victorian specialist, her book is essential reading. Mrs. Viljoen is, perhaps inevitably, very close to her subject—so close, one feels at times, that she loses adequate perspective for her narrative. For the general *College English* reader, her intricate mosaic of the Scottish life of Ruskin's forebears will seem distractingly detailed, though her three chapters dealing with John James Ruskin's life in London are of absorbing interest and promise well for the volumes to come.

DONALD SMALLEY

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

YOUNG HENRY JAMES: 1843-1870, Robert C. LeClair (Bookman Associates, 1955, 469 pp., \$6.50). Professor LeClair's (Principia College) biography is a substantial contribution to the furiously burgeoning James scholarship. The author has watched the young James in action (inaction?) as closely as James watching one of his protagonists, and he has reassembled the background of the novelist with a thoroughness that James could not invariably give to his own creations. Appositely enough, however, in his biographical reconstruction LeClair has borrowed heavily from James himself (in Chs. V and XI, in particular, the verbatim borrowings from the autobiography and letters seem excessive). So far, so good. Actually the reader gets both more and less than this. Less in that the book needs proof-reading desperately. Countless commas are missing; misspellings and other errors abound (the "Samuel Gray Ward" given eight entries in the Index is spelled "Samual" in four and in still another does not appear at all); and on at least four pages (128, 298, 344, and 346) whole lines of type get lost on the page. More, in two senses. In an attempt to document every occurrence in young James's life, the author has amassed an encyclopedia of peripheral faces and places that almost parodies scholarship. He records a hundred words of Patti's recollections of a concert that he assures us James never attended, and to a gratuitous reference to Victor Hugo he appends a fourteen-line footnote even less warranted. Like the freeing of Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*, all of this, while meri-

torious in itself, keeps us from primary concerns. Fortunately Mr. LeClair's other lagniappe is most welcome. It is a critical commentary, beginning in Ch. XIII, on James's early writing that is as valuable as it is unpretentious.

EDWARD STONE

OHIO UNIVERSITY

NEILSON OF SMITH, Margaret Farrand Thorp (Oxford, 1956, 363 pp., \$7). An admirable biography of a thoroughly admirable academic man, William Allan Neilson, the little Scotsman who became noted at Harvard a half-century ago, and then went on to be president of Smith for twenty-two years, was the very model of man, teacher, scholar, and administrator, one of those rare beings who appreciated most things and whom almost everyone appreciated. His story—told by a former member of the Smith English Department, now the wife of Princeton's Willard Thorp and a scholar in her own right—is a model of clear biographical writing that never over or under-documents, patronizes or puffs. It is a book for every teacher to read—not to mention every college president.

RING LARDNER, Donald Elder (Doubleday, 1956, 409 pp., \$4.75). This biography was a long time a-borning, and the result shows thorough research, meticulous separation of fact and legend, and enough bookkeeping to document Cowley's *The Literary Situation*. Lardner has never lacked for recognition and praise, both for his transcription of the American vulgate and for his bleakly incisive analysis of the debilitating effect of contemporary materialistic philosophy and cultural pretensions, but Mr. Elder (despite an overwhelming mass of quotation from Lardner's writings) does not quite support his contention that Ring was a "genius" and an "American original." What this book does show us is a skilled professional writer and humorist who refused to take himself or his works seriously; a man more interested in popular-song writing and the stage than in "literature"; a satirist without a program for the improvement of the society he castigated. Elder writes with wit, style, and understanding; he

admits Lardner's limitations of scope and temperament; he prints many hitherto unpublished letters (most of which could bear editing), the ones to Fitzgerald and the brief, confused exchange with Dreiser being particularly notable; and he furnishes the best study of Ring's technique yet attempted. His critiques of the short stories are masterful, especially his disagreement with Fadiman's and Bolitho's reading of "The Golden Honeymoon" as "one of the deepest manifestations of sheer world despair since 'The City of Dreadful Night.'" Elder tries to excuse but does not

explain the prudery that runs like a scar through all of Lardner's work; however, he does successfully classify the humor of the "nonsense plays," he does unearth the roots of *You Know Me Al* and other baseball stories in the early sports columns, and he does paint a harrowing picture of the last tragic years of Ring's brief life. This is an important book, indispensable to teachers of American literature. An excellent complete bibliography.

JAMES R. FRAKES

RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

General

A VISION, W. B. Yeats (Macmillan, 1956, 305 pp., \$5). At last, the long unavailable, all-important key to Yeats's system of history and personality has been reissued, "with the author's final revisions." From the point of college teacher and student, it is a pity that the publisher could not cater to the tremendous interest in Yeats by putting out a paperback at a lower price, but at least *A Vision* will be more at hand in libraries, institutional and private. And the dedicated person who will spend a lifetime coming back to Yeats no longer has to search vainly the second-hand book-catalogues for this formerly rare item.

PRINCIPLES OF THEATRE ART, ed. H. D. Albright, William P. Halstead, and Lee Mitchell (Houghton Mifflin, 1955, 547 pp., \$6). From Cornell, Michigan, and Northwestern, respectively, comes this complete handbook of dramatic production for the beginning student: the nature of drama, acting, staging and design, and directing. Good exercises, bibliographies, and photos.

THE ANCHOR REVIEW: NUMBER ONE, ed. Melvin J. Lasby (Doubleday, 1955, 265 pp., 95¢, paper). The first in a series, consisting of new essays by our foremost intellectuals—Riesman, Connolly, Malraux, and so on. For literature teachers, the most helpful pieces are Kazin (Amherst) on Dreiser, Fergusson (Rutgers) on Odets, Wilder, and Williams, and Auden (Oxford) and Daiches (Cambridge) on Anglo-American differences.

DISCOVERY NO. 6, ed. Vance Bourjaily (Pocket Books, 1955, 261 pp., 35¢, paper). The last issue of a series that began as a literary magazine and turned out to be an anthology of new writing—though why this should spell finis is never made clear in the editor's preface. The best stories are by Harold Brodkey, who makes a real thing of a middle-age love affair, and by R. V. Cassill, who creates a memorable Marine gunnery sergeant. The best verse is by Richard Eberhart (Wheaton College, Mass.), a dialogue between Poet and Author on art and humanity, which is not presented in such abstractions.

Composition and Communication

IMPROVING READING ABILITY, James B. Stroud, Robert B. Ammons, and Henry A. Bamman (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 2nd ed., 188 pp., \$2.35, paper). Almost identical to the first (1949) edition, this reading manual is designed to improve

reading rate and comprehension by drills on visual analysis and on speeded comprehension of words, phrases, and paragraphs. There are also nineteen selections from 1000 to 3000 words with accompanying exercises. Improvements in the second edi-

tion include: expanded directions for each unit inserted immediately before that unit; the addition of a section on critical reading of longer passages, a table of affixes and roots, a conversion table, and key to the exercises; and the numbering of each paragraph of the connected texts.

SAM S. BASKETT

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

HELPS FOR WRITING: STANDARD USAGES FOR COMPOSITION, William S. Long (Hammond, 30 pp., 35¢, paper). A handy though brief pamphlet of usage, chiefly in punctuation, by a teacher at Radford.

ESSENTIALS OF DISCUSSION AND DEBATE, Halbert E. Gulley (Holt, 145 pp., \$1.50, paper). Prof. Gulley (Illinois) has prepared a comprehensive handbook of the theory and procedure of discussing and debating for the high-school or college student.

EXPOSITORY PROSE: AN ANALYTIC APPROACH, I. J. Kapstein (Harcourt, Brace, 335 pp., \$3.25). A textbook by a teacher at Brown that takes the student through the structure of sentences, paragraphs, and words, through diction and "the elements of communication" (occasion, sense, mood, tone), with many selections analyzed and for analysis. "The focus throughout the work is upon the idea of expository prose as purposive communication to the reader of the writer's experience and his attitudes toward the experience."

UNIFIED ENGLISH COMPOSITION, Gerald D. Sanders, Hoover H. Jordan, and Wallace H. Magoon (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 3rd ed., 542 pp., \$4.50). This text from Michigan State Normal and Ball State Teachers College (Magoon) is an exhaustive formal treatment of types, techniques, and technicalities of writing with built-in reading selections and treatment of mechanics, supplemented by a 100-page workbook. After "orientation" ranging from general discussions of education and writing to advice on study habits, it covers grammar, diction, and paragraph development prior to a systematic and often well-illustrated discussion of exposition, argu-

ment, description, and narration. It adds detailed instructions on how to write a research paper, a feature article, a book review, several types of biography, and letters in the style of Lamb or Cowper. The reading selections appeal both to students of language and writing and to more general political and cultural interests. Recommended for teachers with little time or energy for independent preparation and experiment and for students with enough stamina and previous training to emerge from demanding thorough theoretical study with a more mature command of thought and expression.

HANS P. GUTH

SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE

THE SOUND OF ENGLISH: A DICTION AND USAGE DRILLBOOK, William D. Baker (Prentice-Hall, 94 pp., \$1.50, paper). A self-help workbook, by the prolific Michigan State communicator, with emphasis on oral and visual test patterns. "The aim of the book is to teach the pattern of the correct construction itself, not merely the terminology that describes the construction."

GUIDE TO RESEARCH WRITING, Griffith T. Pugh (Houghton Mifflin, 62 pp., 75¢, paper). This pamphlet "is for the student who has never written a fully documented research paper and needs more help than most books in freshman composition give." From choosing a subject to a specimen research paper. By a teacher at Florida State.

LOGIC AND EFFECTIVE ARGUMENT, Manuel Bilsky (Holt, 127 pp., \$1.40, paper). A very brief account of deductive and inductive logic (including analogical reasoning) and some linguistic pitfalls, with exercises for the student. In his attempt to provide for composition courses an irreducible minimum of material on these topics, Professor Bilsky (Chicago) has served a not very nourishing diet. Several of the key terms, moreover, are badly defined or carelessly used. For example, the term *vague* should not be made "roughly synonymous" with the term *abstract* (p. 12), whether or not the latter term is, as here, wrongly made synonymous with

general (p. 11). It is also misleading to use the term *inductive* as "roughly synonymous" with the term *empirical* (p. 65). In no sense of the term *connotation* does the connotation of a word "consist of other words" (p. 15), nor should this term be permitted to refer to "images or feelings" (p. 16). The definition of *statement* (p. 38) is circular (definitional circularity is not clearly condemned in the rules of definition given on pages 25-26).

MONROE C. BEARDSLEY

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

THINKING STRAIGHT: PRINCIPLES OF REASONING FOR READERS AND WRITERS, Monroe C. Beardsley (Prentice-Hall, 2nd ed., 332 pp., \$2.85 paper). In 1950 Professor Beardsley of Swarthmore College published his *Practical Logic*, and in the same year the first edition of his *Thinking Straight*, a condensed version of the former book, appeared. The present edition "has been thoroughly revised and its contents rearranged." The book is written in the same breezy style as the earlier edition; the revisions stem largely from the author's efforts towards greater clarity,

simplicity, and precision. Its content again significantly reflects contemporary developments in what has come to be known as semantics. In changing the arrangement of the parts, the author has placed the more traditional types of logic, i.e., induction and deduction, near the beginning, whereas in the earlier edition these came near the end. There are also several other relatively minor shifts in arrangement, but in general the content, form, and philosophical approach remain pretty much the same. Those who have found the 1950 edition useful will certainly find this one equally satisfactory.

MANUEL BILSKY

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PREFACE TO CRITICAL READING, Richard D. Altick (Holt, 298 pp., \$2.85). This is the third edition of the excellent text by Altick (Ohio State), with "at least two-thirds of the illustrative and exercise material" new. The most notable change is the chapter on logic, which has been rearranged and greatly enlarged to "Patterns of Clear Thinking." Teacher's guide available.

Anthologies and Texts for Reading

MODERN ENGLISH READINGS, ed. R. S. Loomis, D. L. Clark, and J. H. Middendorf (Rinehart, 1956, 7th ed., 1097 pp., \$4.75). No one can get everything in life he needs from an anthology, not even the habitually pious. Yet this fat new edition of prose, poetry, and drama from Columbia offers over half a dozen genres, including speeches, and embraces past and present authors such as Wordsworth, Tennyson, O'Neill, Synge, Hemingway, Dylan Thomas, Winston Churchill, and J. W. Krutch. The flavorful readings, together with questions and theme suggestions, provide an organized basis for class discussions and for written papers. Whether you use a freshman reader for emulation or from desperation, as a refuge or an evocation, this seasoned collection has indeed proved its adaptability and success after seven editions in twenty-two years.

WILLIAM W. MAIN

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

READINGS IN EXPOSITION, ed. Loomis, Clark, and Middendorf (Rinehart, 7th ed., 589 pp., \$3), is an "alternate edition" of *Modern English Readings*, a serviceable reader that has been in use in one edition or another for more than twenty years. Essays are in six general divisions: biography, personal essays, reading and writing, criticism, speeches, and exposition. Only in the last section do the editors strive to get primarily contemporary material. The gauge throughout the book is literary worthiness and readability. There is no dominant social or economic theme that can become redundant and yet the essays will breed spirited discussion. Six speeches, from the *Gettysburg Address* to a Churchill oration, serve as a courteous nod toward communication(s) programs. The editors have included a concise and informative biography of each essayist at the back of the book. Some twenty pages of questions and suggestions for theme topics will be welcomed. They

are simply helps: automation is still a dream. It is a surprisingly compact book, weighing just under 1 lb., 10 oz.

J. J. LAMBERTS

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

AMERICA THROUGH FOREIGN EYES: 1827-1842, ed. Roland Bartel and Edwin R. Bingham (Heath, 1956, 109 pp., \$1.20, paper). This fine selection of source materials exemplifies the new pattern of providing standard yet challenging material for freshman research papers. Instead of upsetting the library and the instructor with demands for and misinformation on a multiplicity of topics, freshmen can now use one source collection wisely, learning the technique of research at the same time that they learn "content" that they really ought to know. In this case, it's what Mrs. Trollope, Dickens, de Toqueville, Miss Martineau, and the eminently sane Charles Augustus Murray thought of America over a century ago. The apparatus (by two teachers at Oregon) is brief but very much to the point.

FIFTEEN MODERN AMERICAN POETS, ed. George P. Elliott (Rinehart, 1956, 315 pp., \$1.65, paper). This is the most exciting and the richest poetry "text-book" to appear in years, since it makes available most of the best work of the younger (born 1904-1921) established native poets, at a price that one would guess can hardly begin to pay for the permissions involved. In other words, here the teacher and student have the successors to Frost, Eliot, Stevens, and the rest of the older generation, gathered together for the first time at a cost within reach. And how impressive these poets, some possibly known

previously only in a few odd magazine selections, seem when collected and juxtaposed—Elizabeth Bishop, Josephine Miles, Howard Nemerov, Winfield Scott, just to name those not as well publicized as Eberhart, Jarrell, Lowell, Roethke, Shapiro. Miles, Nemerov, Roethke, and Wilbur stand out over their mates, and it is interesting to note that they are all college teachers of English—along with all fifteen in the book except (currently) Bishop, Ruykeyser, Schwartz, and Scott. One is grateful to Editor Elliott (Cornell) and Rinehart for their provision. (Note: An article on this text and the significance of the selection will appear soon in *CE*.)

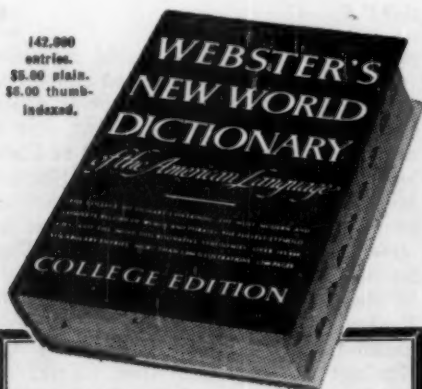
THE AMERICAN TRADITION IN LITERATURE, ed. Sculley Bradley, Richmond C. Beatty, and E. Hudson Long (Norton, 1956, Vol. I, 1358 pp.; Vol. II, 1288 pp.; \$4.95 vol., \$3.95 paper; Shorter Ed., 1 vol., \$5.50, \$3.95 paper). The latest of the American survey anthologies, by well-known scholar-teachers from Penn, Vanderbilt, and Baylor, takes advantage of recent scholarship (e.g., the Johnson edition of Emily Dickinson), including its own (e.g., a new text of *Billy Budd*). The introductions, headnotes, and footnotes are full, relieving the teacher and the class hour of several burdens, and there is a helpful chronology and bibliography. As for the selections, each teacher must fit them into his own ideal table of contents. One will welcome *Billy Budd* as superior to the more usual *Benito Cereno*, and scorn Twain's *Hadleyburg* in favor of *The Mysterious Stranger* (not too much longer), and so on. But no one can deny the breadth, representation, and originality of the selections from the twentieth century. Altogether a useful-looking text.

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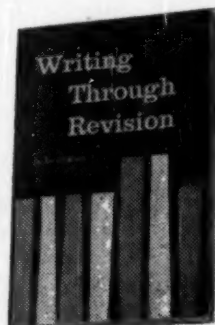
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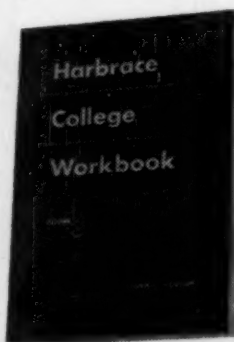
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